



VISTA HOCKEY CLUB  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES  
SAFESPORT PROGRAM  
2025-2026 Season

*The VISTA HOCKEY CLUB (VHC) is committed to improving the development, safety and welfare of its players and all members involved in hockey and our organization. Therefore, it supports the USA Hockey SafeSport Program and CAHA SafeSport Program and requires all players, coaches and members to fully participate.*

## Table of Contents

Introduction and Definitions	2
Resource Page.....	8
Child Abuse Reproting Law for Colorado.....	9
VHC Code of Conduct.....	10
Electronic Communication Policy.....	11
Locker Room Policy.....	13
Hazing, Bullying and Sexual Harassment Policy.....	15
Physical Contact Policy.....	17
Coaches Behavior Policy.....	18
Travel Policy.....	19
Responding and Reporting Abuse Concerns.....	22
Hiring Guidelines.....	25
Taking and Use of Photographic and Recorded Images of Players.....	26
MVHS Photographic and Recorded Images Consent Form.....	27
MVHS Coach, Employee, Parent, Player and Volunteer Code of Conduct Agreement.....	28

# **Introduction**

## **Introduction to the CAHA SafeSport Handbook**

VHC is committed to improving the skill development, the safety and the welfare of our athletes. The SafeSport Program is designed to provide clear guidelines and expectations for all players, coaches and organization members on:

1. abuse or misconduct prevention strategies
2. appropriate behavior
3. effective response to concerns

Unfortunately, youth sports can be a place where misconduct, including physical and sexual abuse has the potential to occur. This VHC approved document will provide the guidelines for appropriate behavior in hopes that the risk of abuse will be minimized. These measures, while aimed at protecting youth, also serve to better protect adult coaches and volunteers.

USA Hockey and Colorado Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA) has long had systems in place to protect its participants from physical abuse, sexual abuse and other types of abuse and misconduct that can be harmful to youth hockey players and other participants. These include without limitation Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Screening, Locker Room Supervision, and Hazing Policies, in addition to Codes of Conduct applicable to administrators, coaches, officials, parents, players and spectators. All forms of abuse and misconduct are prohibited by CAHA. This SafeSport Handbook collects USA Hockey's and CAHA's various policies to protect its participants from all types of misconduct and abuse.

CAHA requires all members to fully participate in both the CAHA Safesport Handbook and the USA Hockey SafeSport handbook. In 2017 the U.S. Center for Safesport opened and will now have jurisdiction over sexual misconduct reports and violations. CAHA members are required to report these violations to the U.S. Center for Safesport, USA Hockey, your affiliate Safesport coordinator or Michelle Peterson.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is the use of coercion to obtain control over another person or to be habitually cruel to another person. Bullying involves an intentional, persistent or repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation, or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish, or isolate another person. Bullying can occur through written, verbal or electronically transmitted expression or by means of a physical act or gesture. Bullying behavior is prohibited in any manner in connection with any USA Hockey sanctioned activities or events.

Examples of bullying prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation physical behaviors, including punching, kicking or choking; and verbal and emotional behaviors, including, the use of electronic communications (i.e., "cyber bullying"), to harass, frighten, degrade, intimidate or humiliate. Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that are reasonably designed to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion. Bullying also does not include rough play or conduct between opponents that occurs during or in connection with a game that is covered by the USA Hockey Playing Rules. Such conduct should be addressed under the Playing Rules.

## **Threats**

A threat to harm others is defined as any written, verbal, physical or electronically transmitted expression of intent to physically injure or harm someone else. A threat may be communicated directly to the intended victim or communicated to a third party. Threatening behavior is prohibited in any manner in connection with any USA Hockey sanctioned activities or events.

Any USA Hockey participant or parent of a participant who engages in any act of threatening or harassing behavior is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the threatening behavior and/or result shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

## **Harassment**

Harassment includes any pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that (a) are intended to cause fear, humiliation, or annoyance, (b) offend or degrade, (c) create a hostile environment, or (d) reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority, or power over an individual participant or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, or mental or physical disability.

Examples of harassment prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation such non-physical offenses as (a) making negative or disparaging comments about a participant's gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, mental or physical disability, race, religion, skin color, ethnic traits or other legally protected grounds; (b) displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols; and (c) withholding or reducing practice or playing time to a participant based on his/her sexual orientation, gender expression (not to include prohibitions on participation when eligibility is based on gender), disability, religion, skin color, ethnic traits or any legally protected grounds. Sexual harassment is a type of harassment covered under the USCSS Policies and Procedures.

## **Hazing**

There shall be no hazing of any participant involved in any of USA Hockey's Member Programs by any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant.

Hazing includes any conduct which is intimidating, humiliating, offensive, or physically harmful. The hazing conduct is typically an activity that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group's members.

Examples of hazing prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation, requiring or forcing (including through peer pressure) the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs; tying, taping, or physically restraining a participant; sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature; sleep deprivation, or the withholding of water and/or food; social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule; beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault, and verbal abuse or threats or implied threats. The activity known as "Locker Boxing" (fighting with helmet and gloves) is also a form of hazing that can produce head trauma in children and young adults and is prohibited in any USA Hockey Member Program.

### **CAHA SafeSport Program**

A set of Policies and Procedures at the state level created by Colorado Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA) aimed at the protection of its players, members, staff and volunteers in the prevention of abuse and misconduct. All CAHA Members, Leagues, Associations and Independent Teams must adhere to the Program.

### **CAHA SafeSport Coordinator**

The CAHA SafeSport Coordinator is responsible for monitoring Association and Team compliance with the USA Hockey SafeSport Program and CAHA SafeSport Program.

### **Covered Individuals**

Jurisdiction Over Covered Individuals Pursuant to the USOC National SafeSport Policy, the jurisdiction of the USCSS applies to (collectively, “Covered Individuals”):

1. Any individual who currently is, or was at the time of a possible SafeSport Code Violation, within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of the National Governing Body (NGB), and/or who is seeking to be within the governance or disciplinary jurisdiction of the NGB, for example through application for membership;
2. All individuals, both athletes and non-athletes, an NGB or the USOC formally authorizes, approves or appoints (i) to a position of authority over Athletes or (ii) to have frequent contact with Athletes; and
3. Additional individuals an NGB identifies as being within the Office’s jurisdiction.

USA Hockey has determined that Covered Individuals within USA Hockey and its programs includes:

- (i) Those persons registered with USA Hockey as Registered Participant Members(players and coaches), referees, and the “Ice Manager/ Volunteer” category.
- (ii) (ii) All persons serving as a member of USA Hockey’s Board of Directors, on a national level council, committee or section, or in any other similar positions appointed by USA Hockey.
- (iii) (iii) All coaches, officials or staff (e.g., trainers, physicians, equipment managers) for any USA Hockey team, camp or national level program.
- (iv) (iv) All USA Hockey national staff.
- (v) (v) Any person that is elected or appointed by a USA Hockey Affiliate or Member Program to a position of authority over Athletes or that has frequent contact with Athletes (even if not registered with USA Hockey).

### **Child Physical Abuse**

Abuse or Child Abuse or Neglect means an act or omission that threatens the health or welfare of a child in one of the following categories:

- Skin bruising, bleeding, malnutrition, failure to thrive, burns, and fracture of any bone,subdural hematoma, soft tissue swelling, or death and:
  - The condition or death is not justifiably explained.
  - The history given concerning the condition is at variance with the degree or type of such condition or death.

- The circumstances indicate that the condition may not be the result of an accidental occurrence.
- A controlled substance is manufactured in the presence of a child, on the premises where a child is found, or where a child resides.
- A child tests positive at birth for either a schedule I or II controlled substance, unless the child tests positive for a schedule II controlled substance as a result of the mother's lawful intake of such substance as prescribed.

### **Physical Abuse and Misconduct in Sport**

It is the policy of USA Hockey that there shall be no physical abuse of any participant involved in any of its Member Programs by any employee, volunteer, independent contractor or other participant. 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. Physical abuse behaviors include but are not limited to the following: pulling, kicking, hitting, punching, slapping, pulling hair, pilling ears, grabbing, shoving, and hazing.

In addition to physical contact or the threat of physical contact of 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.

### **Sexual Abuse, Child Sexual Abuse and Misconduct**

Sexual abuse involves any sexual activity with a minor where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact with a minor that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force regardless of whether there is deception or the minor understands the sexual nature of the activity. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching, or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive written or electronic communications, exposure or voyeurism. Many times, this behavior involves a minor and a person in a position of trust or position of power.

Prohibited sexual misconduct also includes romantic or sexual relationships between adults such as coaches or others in a position of trust and authority and minor participants.

All forms of sexual abuse and misconduct involving a covered individual will be investigated by the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

### **Emotional Abuse**

When a participant is exposed or subjected to emotional abuse means an identifiable and substantial impairment or a substantial risk of impairment of the participants intellectual or psychological functioning or development. Examples of emotional abuse prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation: a pattern of (a) verbal behaviors that (i) attack a participant personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat, or disgusting); or (ii) repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or participants in a manner that serves no productive motivational purpose; (b) physically aggressive behaviors, such as (i) throwing sport equipment, water bottles, or chairs at or near participants; or (ii) punching walls, windows, or other objects; and (c) acts that deny attention and support, such as ignoring a participant for extended periods of time, or routinely or arbitrarily excluding participants from practice or training.

**Misconduct**

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

**Minor**

Participant under the age of 18.

**Peer to Peer Sexual Abuse/Misconduct**

Approximately 1/3 of all sexual abuse occurs at the hands of peers, other minors, and the obligation to report extends to peer-to-peer sexual abuse. Peer-to-peer sexual abuse covers sexual activity between minors without equality or as a result of coercion, physical force, threats, trickery or emotional manipulation to elicit cooperation. There can be an aggressor, age difference or an imbalance in power or intellectual capabilities.

**Grooming Behaviors**

Grooming is the process of desensitization that predators use on minors 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 minor's needs, giving a child special attention, buying gifts and having power and control over the minor.

**Participant**

Includes any person that is registered with USA Hockey or an Affiliate or Member Program to USA Hockey , and further includes , even if not so registered, any person that has regular, routine or frequent access to or supervision over minor participants, and all persons in a supervisory position of a USA Hockey Member Program.

**Responsible Adult**

Shall mean and refer to a person within a Member Program that has either been assigned or has assumed certain duties within a local program or for a particular team.

**SafeSport Program**

The Olympic community's initiative to recognize, reduce and respond to misconduct in sport.

**U.S. Center for SafeSport**

USA Hockey has delegated the jurisdiction and authority to the U.S. Center for SafeSport to (1) investigate all reports or allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct (as referenced in Section 1 under Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Policy and defined by the U.S. Center for SafeSport), (2) issue any interim suspension or measures pending conclusion of the investigation, (3) make recommendations of sanctions or disciplinary action as a result of such investigation, and (4) adjudicate such matter

**USA Hockey SafeSport Program**

A set of Policies and Procedures that assist organizations in the prevention of abuse and misconduct as well as required training; screening and background check program; reporting and responding policies; and how to monitor and supervise. For more information on the USA Hockey SafeSport Program visit <http://www.usahockey.com/SafeSport.aspx>.

### **USOC**

Will refer to the United States Olympic Committee.

### **USCSS**

Will refer to the U.S. Center for SafeSport.

### **USCSS Policy and Procedures**

Will refer to those certain procedures adopted by the USSCS for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movement's sport National Governing Bodies, which may be found at [www.safesport.org/response-resolution/policies](http://www.safesport.org/response-resolution/policies).



## Resource Page

Child Abuse Information	<a href="http://www.childwelfare.gov">www.childwelfare.gov</a>
CAHA SafeSport Coordinator Michelle Peterson	<a href="mailto:mpsafesport@gmail.com">mpsafesport@gmail.com</a> Cell: 303-550-0441
Local Police Number	303-660-7505
Local Social Services	303-663-6270
VHC SafeSport Coordinator	Charles Harding
Sex Offender Registration Website	<a href="http://www.sor.state.co.us">www.sor.state.co.us</a>
USA Hockey SafeSport Number	1-800-888-4656
USA Hockey SafeSport Email	<a href="mailto:SafeSport@usahockey.org">SafeSport@usahockey.org</a>
USA Hockey SafeSport Website	<a href="http://www.usahockey.com/safesport">www.usahockey.com/safesport</a>
U.S. Center for SafeSport	<a href="http://www.safesport.org">www.safesport.org</a> 720-524-5640

For the following USA Hockey SafeSport sections please go to [www.usahockey.com/safesport](http://www.usahockey.com/safesport)

SafeSport Educations and Awareness Training

SafeSport Screening and Background Program

SafeSport Responding to Abuse and Other Misconduct

SafeSport Monitoring and Supervision of the Program

## Colorado Child Abuse Reporting Laws

**What Constitutes Abuse:** Act or omission where child is subjected to sexual assault, molestation, exploitation, emotional abuse or prostitution; where child is in need of food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision because parent or guardian fails to do so; where child exhibits evidence of skin bruising, bleeding, malnutrition, burns fractures, etc.; or circumstances indicate a condition that may not be the product of an accidental occurrence

**Mandatory Reporting Required By:** Physicians, child health associate, dentist, chiropractor, nurse, hospital personnel, school employee, social worker, mental health professional, veterinarian, peace officer, pharmacist, psychologist, fireman, victim's advocate, commercial film and photographic print processor, clergyman, paid coaches of youth sport organizations

**Basis of Report of Abuse/Neglect:** Reasonable cause to know or suspect that a child is subject to circumstances or conditions which would reasonable result in abuse or neglect

**To Whom Reported:** County or district department of social services or local law enforcement agency

**Penalty for Failure to Report or False Report:** Willful violation: Class 3 misdemeanor plus liability for proximately caused damages

For more information and definitions go to [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)



## **VHC Club Code of Conduct**

VHC is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all players and members of the organization. It recognizes the responsibility it has to promote safe practices to protect players from abuse and misconduct. VHC has adopted clear guidelines and protocols to minimize the opportunity for abuse and misconduct and to help staff, volunteers and parents recognize inappropriate or undesirable behavior. VHC is committed to embrace differences and diversity and respect the rights of all players and members and will follow these guiding principles:

- The welfare of each player is the primary concern.
- The rights, dignity and worth of all players should always be respected.
- All players, whatever their age, culture, race, ethnicity, mental or physical disability, ability, gender, language, racial origin, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, gender expression, genetics, religious belief, sexual identity, or skill level have the right to protection from all forms of abuse or misconduct.
- VHC will work in partnership with parents, players, staff, and volunteers to promote the welfare, health and development of our players.

VHC will:

- Promote and implement the USA Hockey and CAHA SafeSport Programs to safeguard the well-being of its players and to prevent abuse and misconduct from occurring.
- Recruit, train, support and supervise staff, members and volunteers to protect players from abuse and to reduce risk to them.
- Require staff, members and volunteers to adopt and abide by the USA Hockey and CAHA SafeSport Programs.
- Respond and report any allegations, disclosure or concern of misconduct or abuse of a player as stated in CAHA SafeSport and USA Hockey SafeSport Programs.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of the SafeSport Program and make any necessary changes.
- Have open and regular communication with parents or guardian(s) of a player regarding any concerns or issues.

## Electronic Communication Policy

VHC understands that social media is a popular communication tool for players, parents and coaches. VHC is also aware that social media is a venue where inappropriate behavior and misconduct can occur. The risk associated with social media include: inappropriate access, sharing personal information, bullying, unwanted and unsupervised contact between adults and minors, receiving unwanted material, online grooming for sexual abuse or actual unlawful sexual exploitation.

Failure to comply with CAHA SafeSport or USA Hockey SafeSport Program guidelines can result in disciplinary action. VHC has a **zero** tolerance rule when it comes to player safety and preventing abuse and misconduct.

***Coaches are prohibited from having players joined to or connected through their personal Facebook page or any other similar social media application.***

### Texting, Email and Similar Electronic Communications

If it is necessary for a coach or staff member to send a direct text message or email to a player, the following guidelines must be followed:

- A parent (or guardian) **must** be copied
- It must be signed so it is clear as to whom or what organization is sending the message. Just using the number or email address for identification is not sufficient.
- It should be non-personal and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities
- It should never include or contain offensive, sexual or inappropriate language or photos
- The time of day and the number of messages sent should be considered
- Records should be kept of every coach's current cell number and email accounts

When a player feels the need to text or email a coach or staff member, the following guidelines must be followed:

- A parent (or guardian) **must** be copied
- It should be sent only with information regarding the organization or team or club activities

### Social Media (Facebook, Snapchat and Similar Sites)

- Coaches are not to have contact with players on any social media application.
- Players are **never** to post pictures of other club members or players that can be hurtful or embarrassing or without their permission.
- Protecting the identity and privacy of all VHC players is required. Do not post names, photos or identifying information at any time.
- Players and parents can "friend" the official VHCpage and coaches can communicate to players through the site. The communication must be open, transparent and professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about the team or club activities.
- Social media sites should not be used to abuse or criticize the organization, members or players.

## **Request to Discontinue All Electronic Communication or Imagery with Athlete**

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

## Locker Room Policy

VHC wants all players to be safe on and off the ice. VHC is also aware that the locker rooms provide a place where abuse and misconduct can occur. Players are particularly vulnerable in locker rooms due to various stages of dress and undress and because players are less supervised. Player to player issues such as sexual abuse, bullying, hazing and harassment often occur when players are not supervised.

Adherence to Locker Room Guidelines can reduce opportunities for misconduct and abuse. It will also allow for a fun and safe place for players while still holding to hockey traditions. VHC asks that players and coaches follow USA Hockey and CAHA SafeSport Program guidelines at all times.

VHC requires all players and coaches to report to their Hockey Director any and all misconduct, abuse or violations immediately.

*All programs are responsible to work with their teams and coaches to adequately ensure that locker room monitors are in place at all appropriate times. It is the policy of USA Hockey that all USA Hockey Member Programs must have at least one responsible screened adult (which may include coaches, managers or other volunteers) present monitoring the locker room during all team events to assure that only participants (coaches and players), approved team personnel and family members are permitted in the locker room and to supervise the conduct in the locker room.*

### Player Behavior

- Locker rooms and showers should be used by same aged peers when possible, no mixed gender allowed.
- Opposite sex players should be provided separate changing and showering facilities.
- The showers are for showering only. No horseplay, urinating on others, physical contact, sexual activity or other forms of misconduct is allowed.
- No bullying, hazing, harassment, discrimination, fighting or locker boxing.
- Players are not permitted to touch other player's genital area or their own in a way that will make others uncomfortable.
- The use of a mobile device's recording capabilities in the locker rooms is not permitted at any USA Hockey sanctioned event, provided that it may be acceptable to take photographs or recordings in a locker room in such unique circumstances as a victory celebration, team party, etc., where all persons in the locker room are appropriately dressed and have been advised that photographs or recordings are being taken.
- No pornographic materials are permitted in the locker room.
- Nudity is kept to a minimum. After showering players are asked to dress quickly.
- No drugs, alcohol or other illegal substances are allowed.
- No physical contact between players in a sexual nature is allowed.
- The locker room is not a place to criticize or humiliate teammates.
- Shower and changing at the club/organization are optional.

## **Co-Ed Locker Rooms**

As a team sport in which youth teams can often include both male and female players, special circumstances may exist that can increase the chance of abuse or misconduct. If the team consists of both male and female players, both female and male privacy rights must be given consideration and appropriate arrangements made. It is not acceptable under USA Hockey's Sexual Abuse Policy for persons to be observing the opposite gender while they dress or undress. There are a variety of ways to comply with the above tenets, and what works may depend on the locker rooms that are available at a particular facility. Where possible, the male and female players should undress/dress in separate locker rooms and then convene in a single dressing room prior to the game or team meeting. Once the game is finished, the players may come to one locker room and then the male and female players proceed to their separate dressing rooms to undress and shower (separately), if available. If separate locker rooms are not available, then the genders may take turns using the locker room to change and then leave while the other gender changes. When separate locker rooms are used, both locker rooms must be properly monitored. Where possible, when both male and female players are together in the locker room, there should be at least two adults in the locker room that have been properly screened in compliance with USA Hockey Screening Policy.

## **Coaches Behavior**

- The responsible adult that monitors and supervises the locker room shall have completed SafeSport training and completed a background check through the association.
- Acceptable locker room monitoring could include having locker room monitors inside the locker room while participants are in the locker room, or could include having a locker room monitor in the immediate vicinity (near the door within arm's length and so that the monitor can sufficiently hear inside the locker room) outside the locker room that also regularly and frequently enters the locker room to monitor activity inside
- If the monitor(s) are inside, then it is strongly recommended that there be two monitors, both of which have been screened.
- If a coach needs to speak to an individual player in the locker room, the door must remain open or another coach or parent must be present.
- Coaches should have a separate place to change and shower.
- Coaches are never to be nude among players.
- Locker room monitors are to report any SafeSport violations, misconduct or abuse immediately and following the reporting guidelines.

# Hazing, Bullying and Sexual Harassment Policy

VHC feels strongly that hazing, bullying, sexual harassment, initiation rituals and physical punishments are not permitted within the organization. **Any form of misconduct by the team, coach or an individual in attempt to bond or take action against another individual or group of individuals, which result in abuse, harassment, intimidation or any form of degradation is not allowed by any player, coach, volunteer or member of VHC.**

Player and coaches are also **required** to follow the USA Hockey and CAHA SafeSport Hazing and Bullying Guidelines.

VHC is committed to offering an environment that is free of intimidation and abuse and has **zero** tolerance for misconduct. VHC requires all members to report any of the following behaviors.

## Hazing

**Hazing** can be defined as any actions, whether physical, sexual, verbal, mental, emotional or psychological which subjects another person or group, voluntary or involuntary, with a result that has the intended or unintended effect of abusing, mistreating, degrading, humiliating, harassing, or intimidating the person who may be younger, weaker or have less power. These behaviors are prohibited by players, coaches, parents or any member or associate of VHC.

The following are examples of, but not limited to, misconduct that is prohibited by VHC.

### Hazing Behaviors

- Forcing the consumption of alcohol, drugs or other substances
- Shaving of body parts
- Any activity that is illegal, perverse, or publicly indecent
- Vandalism of any property or forced participation in pranks
- Dietary restrictions, sleep deprivation or creation of excess fatigue or other unhealthy behaviors
- Deprivation of sleep or disturbing individuals during normal sleep hours, creating of excessive fatigue
- Calisthenics intended as a physically abusive exercise
- Physical abuse of any kind (paddling, whipping or beating)
- Mentally abusive or demeaning behavior
- Forced tattooing, branding or public stunts
- Road trips, kidnapping, drop offs or any other such activity
- Subjecting a member to cruel and unusual psychological conditions
- Morally degrading or humiliating games or activities
- Verbal or cruel harassment including yelling and screaming
- Participation in sexual rituals or assaults and/or required nudity or contact
- Deception or threat contrived to convince the new member that he/she will not be permitted to join
- Required songs, chants, yelling or screaming
- Activities that promote or encourage the violation of state laws and club policy

Hazing does not include challenging team workouts or assigning team duties to specific players.



## **Bullying**

**Bullying** can occur when there is an imbalance of power and the person who is older, larger, stronger or more aggressive uses his or her power to control or harm someone in a weaker position. The person bullying has the intent or goal to cause harm (i.e. the act is not accidental) and the action is usually repetitious.

### **Bullying Behaviors**

- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, slapping, punching, etc...
- Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation and/or the continual ignoring of individuals
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual comments and/or suggestions
- Unwanted physical contact
- Socially spreading rumors
- Leaving players out of group activities, telling them they are unwanted
- Cyberbullying; using the internet, email, texting, mobile phones, social media or other digital technologies to do harm to others

## **Sexual Harassment**

**Sexual Harassment** is unwanted, often persistent, sexual attention and any other behavior with sexual overtones that creates a hostile work or learning environment.

### **Sexual Harassment Behaviors**

- Written or verbal abuse threats, physical contact, sexually graphic literature, sexual advances, demands for sexual favors
- Sexually oriented comments, jokes, lewd comments or sexual innuendoes, taunts about a player's body or dress
- Intimidating sexual remarks
- Physical contact, fondling, pinching or kissing
- Offensive phone calls or photos and/or bullying on the basis of sex
- Sexual violence such as sexual assault, rape, and sexual coercion

# **Physical Contact Policy**

It is sometimes appropriate and necessary to have direct physical contact with players in order to develop their skills. These guidelines have been created to provide practical guidance for VHC coaches and those working directly with players to keep players 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 these guidelines and to report immediately those who violate them.

## **Appropriate Physical Contact**

- Physical contact takes place in public or in the presence of others
- Physical contact for the purpose of developing skill or technique
- Physical contact with no potential for physical or sexual intimacies during the contact
- The contact is for the benefit of the player, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult
- Celebratory gestures such as high-fives, fist bumps, pats on the back, shoulder and head are appropriate
- Consolation gestures such as publicly embracing a crying athlete
- Physical contact assisting an injured player off the ice, preventing an injury or treating an injury are appropriate
- Touching in a non-threatening, non-sexual manner

## **Prohibited Physical Contact**

- Lap sitting
- Lingered, maintaining prolonged or repeated embraces that go beyond what is appropriate
- Slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from an athlete
- Playful yet inappropriate contact that is not a part of regular training, (e.g. tickling, horseplay, wrestling)
- Continued physical contact that makes an athlete visibly 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, harassment or misconduct
- Kissing, back rubs or massages.

## Coaches Behavior Policy

If VHC coaches choose to offer private lessons, the organization will require they follow the guidelines.

VHC expect all coaches to abide by appropriate player/coach conduct. VHC mandates that coaches put player safety first and always be aware of their own actions and behaviors and the possible consequences. All staff and volunteers should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behavior in order to promote player's welfare and reduce the likelihood of abuse.

- Follow USA Hockey and CAHA SafeSport Photographic and Recorded Images of Players Guidelines
- Follow USA Hockey and CAHA SafeSport Physical Contact Guidelines
- 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 kids to avoid any confusion
- Never be alone with a player. Have another coach or parent present.
- Have conversations on the ice or in public, never behind closed doors
- Move meetings that may start in private to public areas
- When providing private lessons, do not change or dress with a minor
- 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.
- During lessons, adhere to the purpose of the lesson and avoid horseplay or rough, physical or sexual play or games
- If you need to discuss sensitive issues related to the sport that you think has the potential to upset a player, have another coach or parent join the discussion.
- Private lessons are to be held at appropriate locations and times. No lessons will be held at places or time(s) that could cause confusion about the purpose of the lesson or the nature of the relationship.
- Do not exchange gifts unless part of a team activity with full participation
- Do not socialize with the players outside of hockey. Do not participate in dinners, movies or activities alone with an athlete and unrelated to hockey.

Report the following to your SafeSport Coordinator immediately.

- If the player seems unreasonably upset
- If a player is sexually inappropriate with you or another player
- If the player questions any of your actions or behaviors
- If the player misunderstands or misinterprets any actions or behaviors on your part
- If the player discloses abuse, misconduct or questionable behavior by another player, coach or other person
- Any general overall concern for the player that was made aware during your time together

# Travel Policy

VHC recognizes the importance of travel for competitive hockey team and expects respectable and mature behavior for our participants both home and away. VHC also understands the additional risk of misconduct during overnight travel. It is encouraged to have parents arrange all local travel requirements.

The following guidelines are a requirement for players who wish to travel with their team. Any violation of these guidelines will result in disciplinary actions. Coaches and players are to report any violations to the Hockey Director or SafeSport Coordinator immediately.

## Player Behavior

- Travel guidelines must be agreed upon and signed by players before travel is permitted
- Players are not permitted in coach's room alone, only as a team
- Players should always travel in pairs when leaving the premises
- Drugs, alcohol and other illegal substances are not permitted in player's rooms
- Pornographic material is not allowed among players and in rooms during travel
- Roommates will shower alone and allow for privacy of others when changing
- Guests other than teammates are not allowed in player's rooms
- Players are required to follow all travel rules and Code of Conducts
- Players will have access to their parents without permission of the coach but must be within the parameters of curfew times. Visits with parents outside of curfew times, need to be discussed with coaches prior to curfew breach
- Players involved in a romantic relationship shall not share a hotel room or sleeping arrangements with each other.

## Coaches Behavior

- 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 or unless the parent or guardian of the minor player is also sharing the same hotel room (e.g., two adults, one or both of whom is a coach, and their children, share a hotel room).
- It is strongly recommended that organizations and teams incorporate a parent consent for any minor player that will travel without his or her parents.
- Coaches, parents and other adults are not allowed in a player's room except for emergencies
- Coaches are only allowed in a player's room if accompanied by another adult or coach
- Sleeping arrangements will be decided by coach, based on age, gender and personality prior to departure
- It should be predetermined what locations players are free to visit, the curfew time(s) and when and where team meetings will be held
- Coaches and team chaperones should have rooms near the player's rooms
- If a meeting inadvertently begins in private, the meeting should be moved to an open and observable location
- Coaches and other assigned adults should conduct room checks together at curfew time(s)
- Players will have access to their parents without permission of the coach

- Coaches are not permitted to drive or transport players alone, unless an emergency medical need exists. If the coach is a parent they can drive other athletes as long as their child is in the car at all times.
- When a player is traveling without parents, coaches are required to notify player's parents before taking disciplinary action, other than playing time during a game
- Besides coaches, another adult should be present and assist with child safety issues and the welfare of the children during travel

## **Billeting Policy**

It is recognized that some youth and junior hockey players do leave home to play hockey in a location away from their parents. In those circumstances, the organization or team typically arranges for the player to live with a host or billet family. Having youth players live outside their homes increases risk for abuse and misconduct to occur. All organizations and teams that arrange for players to live with billet families shall have written policies and procedures in place to govern the arrangement. All USA Billeting policies and procedures shall be followed including the following requirements:

- No more than two players should be housed with any one billet family (at the Junior level, there may be exceptions to the number of players permitted in one billet home if approved by the USA Hockey Junior Council).
- All adults living in the household of the billet family shall be screened in accordance with the USA Hockey Screening Policy prior to the player moving in with the family.
- It is strongly recommended that all billet families be two-parent homes. However, single parent billet families may be acceptable, but the organization or team shall take additional reasonable steps to regularly monitor the billeting arrangement and its compliance with the USA Hockey SafeSport Policies.
- All adults living in the household of the billet family shall have completed training in compliance with the Education and Awareness Training Policy prior to the player moving in with the family.
- Billet families and the player and player's parents shall all sign an agreement with the organization and/ or team that they will comply with the rules and regulations for the billeting arrangement and the USA Hockey SafeSport Policies. Revised 6/2/2017 USA Hockey SafeSport Program Handbook
- Based upon the requirements of the jurisdiction, the player's parents shall sign and provide a power of attorney and/or guardianship (as necessary by applicable state law) to the billet family adults to allow for them to make emergency medical and schooling decisions.
- Each team shall have a billet coordinator who shall be responsible for overseeing compliance with the Billeting Policy and all other USA Hockey SafeSport Policies.
- The team shall have a mandatory curfew for all billeted players. The host family may have an earlier curfew.
- Players shall agree to comply with the house rules of the billet families, including curfews, chores/ cleaning, telephone usage, etc. Complaints about unusual rules shall be addressed with the team billet coordinator.

- Players shall not stay overnight at any other home except with the permission of the player's parents and advance notification to the billet family and team billet coordinator.
- Players are not to drive billet family vehicles without automobile liability insurance as required by applicable state law, and documentation and approval of the billet family.
- The organization's/team's billeting policy shall include requirements that the billet family maintain appropriate homeowners/renters insurance.
- Players staying with a billet family shall be permitted to make regular check-in phone calls to parents. Team personnel and billets shall allow for any unscheduled check-in phone calls initiated by either the player or parents.

## Responding and Reporting Abuse Concerns

VHC believes it is the responsibility of all members, participants, 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 VHC 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:

- Your organizations SafeSport coordinator
- USA Hockey SafeSport
- CAHA SafeSport Coordinator
- U.S. SafeSport Center (for all reports of *covered individuals* involving a sexual component)
- Law Enforcement or Social Services

### Reporting Policy

It is the policy of USA Hockey and CAHA SafeSport Programs that every employee or volunteer of any USA Hockey sanctioned program must report:

1. ***Suspicious 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 USA Hockey and CAHA SafeSport Programs.*** They are to be reported to USA Hockey, CAHA and Local SafeSport Coordinators.
3. ***Any violations of CAHA policies prohibiting emotional abuse, sexual harassment, bullying, threats and hazing.*** They are to be reported to the appropriate Member and CAHA SafeSport Coordinators.

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.

Further, in addition to any legal obligation to report sexual abuse or misconduct to law enforcement authorities, all Covered Individuals are required to and shall promptly report any alleged violations of the Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Policy to either the USCSS or to USA Hockey as set forth below and in Section 4 of the USCSS Policies & Procedures. A Covered Individual's failure to report may subject such person to disciplinary action by the USCSS.

Concerns, suspicions or suspected "grooming" behaviors are to be told immediately to the SafeSport 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 USA Hockey and CAHA SafeSport Procedures
- 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 VHC, it should still be reported to authorities.** Know that authorities have professional in interviewing child victims about abuse and it is not your 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
- 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 Hockey 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, VHC 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.

## Hiring Guidelines

When hiring a new staff or volunteer person to work within the VHC organization, we will include child sexual abuse prevention screening into the general screening process. This process is for all adults and youth who are looking for employment or volunteer positions within the organization. VHC will not make exceptions for applicants familiar with the organization or who are past employees.

While no screening can identify every potential child abuser, you can reduce the risk by learning all you can about an applicant; most importantly their interest in working with youth. VHC believes that that SafeSport Program will deter coaches who may be at risk for abusing players from applying with the organization.

VHC will follow USA Hockey and CAHA SafeSport Screening Programs.

### Educate Applicants

- Share your USA Hockey and CAHA SafeSport policies with all applicants. This will let them know the dedication to abuse and misconduct prevention and might deter some applicants.
- Share all Codes of Conducts.
- Inform applicant that signature and full participation of the SafeSport Program is required.
- Ask if applicant has any problems with the SafeSport Programs or Codes of Conduct.
- Ask what type of supervision the applicant prefers to work under?
- Question the applicant with specific scenarios regarding child safety. Look for appropriate responses that fit your policy and procedures.
- Document commitment to SafeSport Program

### Questions for Applicants

- Describe what appropriate behavior around youth is, how should physical contact happen and what are appropriate adult/youth boundaries?
- Tell me about your relationship with children? Adults?
  - *Here you are looking for healthy child and adult relationships.*
  - *Who does the applicant prefer to spend time with?*
- What do you enjoy doing with children?
  - *Does the applicant describe doing normal activities with youth? Or does it appear excessive?*
- How do you see your role in the lives of children in our program?
- Have you ever been disciplined for your behaviors toward children?
- Has anyone ever misunderstood or questioned your relationship/behaviors with children?
- Is there anyone who might suggest you not work with youth? Why?
- Is there an age or gender you prefer to work with?
  - *Having a specific age or gender can be a red flag. Ask follow up questions for clarification.*
- What other hobbies and activities do you enjoy?
  - *Does this include children or does she/he enjoy normal adult activities?*
  - *Does the applicant have adult relationships as well and enjoy adult activities?*

## **Taking and Use of Photographic and Recorded Images of Players**

VHC wants to promote fun hockey activities and information about the organization and/or its players through photographs, recorded images and videos whether on our website or through print. To do this in a way that ensures the safety of players and members, VHC has safeguards to protect inappropriate use of images or recorded images. (This includes the use of a camera, digital camera, video recorder, mobile phone or personal digital assistant device or other recording device.)

There are risks posed directly and indirectly through the use of photographs and recorded images. These images can be used as a means of identifying players thus leaving them vulnerable to people who wish to “groom” them for child abuse or possibly provide information to estranged parents. Also, the images themselves can be used, modified and shared among the offender population. To avoid misuse, VHC requires the following guidelines be adhered to.

- Ask for parental permission prior to use of a player’s image. Be clear with parents as to how the image will be used and stored (see parental consent form).
- Never publish personal data (email, phone, home address or other information) of a player without signed consent form.
- Only use images of players suitably dressed to reduce the risk of inappropriate use.
- When recording a player for teaching purposes or recruiting needs, care should be taken in storing such recordings and who they are shared with.
- Members should be vigilant and report any unknown individuals who are recording or photographing organization members.
- Members also need to report any concerns regarding inappropriate taking or publishing of photographs or recorded images.
- Report any violations.

### **Hiring a Professional Photographer**

- Have the photographer sign the volunteer Code of Conduct and read this guideline.
- At large events, all parties interested in taking photos should register personal details with VHC.
- Provide clear guidelines about expected behavior and content of the photography.
- Photographers must wear identification, provided by VHC, at all times.
- Do not allow photographer unsupervised access to players or one-on-one photo sessions without parent permission.
- Do not approve photo sessions outside events or at a participant’s home.
- Ensure the images taken reflect the positive aspects of hockey and the organization.



## VHC Photographic and Recorded Images Consent Form

VHC recognizes the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all young people in sport.

In accordance with our SafeSport Program, we will not permit photographs, video or identifying information of players to be taken or shared without the consent of the parents and players.

VHC will follow the guidance for the use of photographs and recording images as described in the SafeSport Program.

VHC will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purpose intended. If you become aware of images being used inappropriately, you should inform VHC immediately.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (parent) consent to VHC  
photographing or videoing and providing personal information about my child  
\_\_\_\_\_ (player) for the purposes of training,  
recruiting, marketing and promoting for further hockey development.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



**VHC**  
**Coach, Employee, Athlete, Parent, and Volunteer Code of Conduct**  
**Agreement**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By signing below, I am attesting that:

- I have read, understand and agree to comply with the “*VHC SafeSport Program*”;
- I have read, understand and agree to comply with the “*CAHA SafeSport Program*”;
- I have read, understand and agree to comply with the “*USA Hockey SafeSport Program*”;
- I have asked for and received clarification about any policies I did not understand;
- I understand that failure to comply with any of these policies may result in suspension or termination of employment or volunteer duties as a coach, employee or volunteer;
- I understand that these policies cannot address every possible situation that presents itself and they do not eliminate the expectation of good judgment and professional behavior at all times;
- I understand I am required to report any violations of these policies to the Hockey Director immediately;
- I have read, understand and agree to the comply with the “*VHC Club Code of Conduct*”;

Signature of Coach, Employee, Athlete, Parent or Volunteer

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_