



## **KCRC Participant Safety Handbook**

### **Foreword**

The policies and procedures within this Participant Safety Handbook are designed to promote a safe sporting environment and are modeled after the SafeSport program created by the United States Olympic Committee. The SafeSport program is designed to prevent misconduct, abuse, and inappropriate behaviors among the coaches, participants, and volunteers who are involved with youth sports teams. This is accomplished through education and training, as well as reporting and enforcement policies that include criminal background checks.

USRowing has adopted the SafeSport program and encourages its members to implement similar programs. As a USRowing member, the Kansas City Rowing Club (KCRC) has created this Participant Safety Handbook to guide its staff, members, and volunteers as they participate in club events, programs, and activities. KCRC is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for athletes' physical, emotional, and social development and to ensuring that it promotes an environment free of misconduct.

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# Section 1: Training and Education

## **TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

The policies and procedures of KCRC require staff members and/or volunteers to report abuse, misconduct and violations of its Participant Safety Handbook. To do so, staff members and/or volunteers (volunteer coaches, parent chaperones, referees, and other volunteers) should have a basic understanding of the areas of misconduct that this handbook strives to prevent, which includes:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct, and
- Sexual misconduct, including child sexual abuse

Staff members and/or volunteers must successfully complete the awareness training and quiz, which can be found at [safesport.org](http://safesport.org).

Those staff members and/or volunteers who are required to take the awareness training and quiz will be required to complete the process every three years, or no more than 30 day(s) before they have contact with athletes.

# Section 2: Screening Staff Members and/or Volunteers

## **APPLICANT SCREENING**

Staff members, as well as contractors and volunteers who meet specific criteria, must consent to and pass a formal applicant screening process before performing services for KCRC. Elements of our screening process include, as applicable, successful completion of an application, interview, reference check, and criminal background check.

## **DETERMINING WHO SHOULD BE SCREENED**

Prospective staff members, contractors, and volunteers should undergo the formal application and screening process when they meet any of the following criteria:

- All paid staff members who work directly with athletes as part of their jobs.
- Contractors who work directly with athletes.
- Volunteers who may be assigned an ongoing role to work directly with athletes on behalf of the club in a supervised and/or unsupervised capacity. This may include scenarios where volunteers (such as the parents of athletes) are assigned by the club to:
  - Assist with practices.
  - Chaperone trips

## **WRITTEN APPLICATIONS**

Each applicant for a position will complete and sign an application form and a general release for contacting references and conducting a background check. The written application will:

- Ask about previous work and volunteer experiences
- Ask questions intended to elicit information concerning high-risk behaviors
- Provide a written release for contacting personal references and performing a criminal background check, including an indemnification clause
- Ask open-ended questions that encourage broad answers
- Use disclosure statements to ask applicants about previous criminal arrests or convictions for sexual offenses, violence against youth, and other violent criminal offenses or felonies

## **PERSONAL INTERVIEW**

Appropriate staff will interview applicants whose experience and credentials are considered a fit for available positions. During this interview, KCRC will ask questions to encourage discussion, clarify responses, and expand on the applicant's answers to questions from the written application. Interviews will be conducted by the appropriate KCRC staff using the interview guidelines outlined in this document.

## **REFERENCES**

References of applicants may be contacted (either by phone or in writing) and asked specific questions regarding the applicant's professional experiences, demeanor, and appropriateness for involvement with minor athletes and participants.

## **RELEASE**

Each applicant will also provide a signed release, consistent with federal, state, and local laws regulating employment practices that allows references to speak freely about the applicant's qualifications without fear of reprisal and authorizing KCRC to obtain information concerning an applicant's past employment, volunteer experience, and information provided by the applicant during the screening process (i.e., written application and personal interview). See the Appendix for sample forms, documents, and applicant screening resources.

## **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY**

All applicants will be asked to undergo a criminal background check that complies with the Fair Credit Reporting Act **before** providing services for KCRC. Through this criminal background check, KCRC will utilize reasonable efforts to ascertain past criminal history of an applicant.

Findings from the criminal background check will be reviewed by the KCRC SafeSport Committee. In the event that it is necessary to perform a criminal background check on a member of the KCRC SafeSport Committee, at least two other members of the Committee must review the findings from the report.

A USRowing partner provides the following website to perform a background check:

<https://www.ncsisafe.com/members/NewAccount.aspx?pid=UNIT2052>

## **PROCESS**

The Criminal Background Check Consent and Waiver Release form must be submitted and the applicant cleared before he or she may perform services for KCRC. On receipt of the Criminal Background Check Consent and Waiver Release form, KCRC will request that its vendor perform the criminal background check that includes:

- (1) a national search of state criminal repositories;
- (2) a search of state sexual offender registries; and
- (3) a verification of a person's identification against his or her Social Security number or other personal identifier.

## **POTENTIAL DISQUALIFYING FACTORS**

### **Criminal History**

KCRC will use a criminal background check to gather information about an applicant's prior criminal history. The information revealed by the criminal background check may disqualify an applicant from serving as a staff member, contractor, and/or volunteer. Information that could disqualify an applicant includes, but is not limited to, arrests, pleas of no contest and criminal convictions—especially if the underlying criminal behavior involved sex or violence.

### **Pending Court Cases**

No decision will be made on an individual's eligibility for work as a new staff member, contractor, and/or volunteer if that person has a pending court case for any of the potentially disqualifying offenses until the pending case concludes. If, however, during the case's pendency, the organization undertakes an independent investigation and conducts a hearing, any determination may be used to disqualify the individual.

### **Full Disclosure**

Each applicant has the affirmative duty to disclose his or her criminal history. Failing to disclose or intentionally misrepresenting an arrest plea or conviction history in an application or any other information provided by an applicant during the screening process is grounds for employment, volunteer, and/or membership revocation or restriction, regardless of when the offense is discovered.

- If an applicant (1) is arrested, (2) pleads, or (3) is convicted of a crime other than a traffic offense during the screening process, the applicant is required to disclose such information immediately.
- In the event a person is serving as a staff member, contractor, or volunteer and (1) is arrested, (2) pleads, or (3) is convicted after the completion of the screening process, he or she has an affirmative duty to disclose such information immediately to his or her supervisor or KCRC administrator.
- **Any applicant who has been banned by another sport organization, as temporarily or permanently ineligible, must self-disclose this information. A failure to disclose is a basis for disqualification for potential applicants.**

## **FINDINGS**

Notice of findings will be provided to the KCRC SafeSport Committee. KCRC's criminal background check report will return a "red light" or "green light" score. A green light score means that the background check vendor located no records that would disqualify the applicant. A green light score, however, is not a certification of safety or permission to bypass/ignore other screening efforts. Other disqualifying factors may exist, and can be revealed through an interview, reference checks, and a completed application.

Note: A "green light" finding does not mean that an individual is safe to work with children. Instead a "green light" indicates that no criminal history was found that would disqualify the individual from working with children.

A **red light** finding means the criminal background check revealed criminal records which suggest the applicant "does not meet the criteria" and is not suitable for organization employment or volunteer assignment. Individuals who are subject to disqualification under a "red light" finding may challenge the accuracy of the reported information reported by the criminal background check.

**OPTION ONE: Appeal to Organization** — If an individual receives a red light finding and wants to contest KCRC's decision not to accept his or her application based on the red light finding, the individual may request a hearing before KCRC's SafeSport Committee, which will communicate its findings to the individual and the KCRC board of directors.

**DISCRETION** — If any discretion is exercised in the application of this policy, it shall be exercised in a uniform manner so that substantially similar convictions and circumstances result in substantially similar treatment of applicants.

**OPTION TWO: Appeal to Criminal Background Check Vendor** — Any disqualified individual has the right to dispute the findings of the criminal background check directly with KCRC's approved Criminal Background Check Vendor. A disqualified individual may not appeal the automatic disqualification or the results of the findings of the criminal background check vendor to KCRC. KCRC is required by the policy to accept the findings of the approved criminal background check vendor.

## **FREQUENCY OF CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS**

Criminal background checks will be refreshed every three years or as otherwise required by law for staff members and/or volunteers who are 18 years of age or older and perform services for KCRC.

### **AFFIRMATIVE DUTY TO DISCLOSE**

If, during the course of employment or participation in KCRC's program, a staff member or volunteer is accused, arrested, indicted, or convicted of a criminal offense against a child, it is the duty and responsibility of the staff member or volunteer to notify an immediate supervisor and the KCRC SafeSport committee.

### **OTHER POTENTIAL DISQUALIFYING FACTORS**

Even if an applicant passes a criminal background check, other factors may disqualify an applicant. An individual may be disqualified and prohibited from providing services for KCRC if the individual has:

- Been held liable for civil penalties or damages involving sexual or physical abuse of a minor;
- Been subject to any court order involving any sexual or physical abuse of a minor, including but not limited to domestic order or protection;
- A history with another organization (employment, volunteer, etc.) of complaints of sexual or physical abuse of minors;
- Resigned, been terminated, or been asked to resign from a position - paid or unpaid - due to complaint(s) of sexual or physical abuse of minors;
- A history of other behavior that indicates they may be a danger to participants in KCRC; or
- Not met the job requirements.

### **REVIEW OF DISQUALIFIERS**

KCRC will review its disqualifiers every three years or as otherwise required or modified by law.

### **RECORDS**

Records are maintained by the KCRC secretary for a period indicated by applicable law or until the applicant is no longer affiliated with KCRC, whichever date is later.

## Section 3: Establishing Boundaries

### **ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICY COMMITMENT TO SAFETY**

#### **Overview**

In the event that any staff member or volunteer observes inappropriate behaviors (i.e., policy violations), suspected physical or sexual abuse or misconduct, it is the personal responsibility of each staff member and volunteer to immediately report his or her observations to an immediate supervisor and the KCRC SafeSport Committee.

The KCRC SafeSport Committee will notify law enforcement when it is presented with reports of physical or sexual abuse.

**Staff members and volunteers should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities.** Instead, it is the responsibility of each staff member and volunteer to immediately report suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse to the KCRC SafeSport Committee. Complaints and allegations will be addressed under KCRC's Disciplinary Rules and Procedures (which can be found on page 24 of this document).

#### **Application**

This Policy applies to staff members and individuals who engage in recurring volunteer activities.

Staff members, volunteers, athletes, and participants shall refrain from all forms of misconduct, which include:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct
- Sexual misconduct, including child sexual abuse.



## PROHIBITED CONDUCT

### Child Sexual Abuse

**Exceptions:** None.

Prohibited Conduct	Examples
<p>(1) Any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. 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.</p> <p><b>Note concerning peer-to-peer child sexual abuse:</b> Sexual contact between minors also can be abusive. Whether or not a sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance of power and/or intellectual capabilities.</p> <p>(2) Any act or conduct described as child sexual abuse under federal or state law.</p>	<p>Sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching, or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive electronic or written communications, exposure, or voyeurism.</p>

### Emotional Misconduct

**Exceptions:** Emotional misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline, or improving athletic performance.

Prohibited Conduct	Examples
<p>(1) A pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete. Non-contact behaviors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. verbal acts</li> </ul>	<p>Examples of emotional misconduct prohibited by this policy include, without limitation:</p> <p>(1) <b>Verbal Acts.</b> A pattern of verbal behaviors that (a) attack an athlete personally (e.g., calling them worthless, fat, or disgusting) or (b) repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or participants in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.</p> <p>(2) <b>Physical Acts.</b> A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as (a) throwing sport equipment, water bottles, or chairs at or</p>

<p>b. physical acts c. acts that deny attention or support</p> <p>(2) Any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect).</p>	<p>in the presence of participants; or (b) punching walls, windows, or other objects.</p> <p>(3) <b>Acts that Deny Attention and Support.</b> A pattern of (a) ignoring an athlete for extended periods of time or (b) routinely or arbitrarily excluding participants from practice.</p>
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### Physical Misconduct

**Exceptions:** 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, punching, and kicking are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports, but have no place in rowing.

Prohibited Conduct	Examples
<p>(1) Contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to, cause physical harm to an athlete or other sport participants; or</p> <p>(2) Any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect, assault).</p>	<p>(1) <b>Contact offenses.</b> Behaviors that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) punching, beating, biting, striking, choking, or slapping an athlete;</li> <li>(b) intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment;</li> <li>(c) providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age (under U.S. law);</li> <li>(d) providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete;</li> <li>(e) encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play prematurely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional;</li> <li>(f) prescribing dieting or other weight-control methods (e.g., weigh-ins, caliper tests) without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of athlete.</li> </ul> <p>(2) <b>Non-contact offenses.</b> Behaviors that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space);</li> </ul>

	<p>(b) forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g. requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface);</p> <p>(c) withholding, recommending against, or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention, or sleep.</p>
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**Sexual Misconduct**

**Exceptions:** None

Prohibited Conduct	Examples
<p>(1) Any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is (a) nonconsensual or forced, (b) coerced or manipulated, or (c) perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative, or threatening manner;</p> <p>(2) Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct, or indirect authority. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative; or</p> <p>(3) Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape)</p> <p><b>Note: An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete.</b></p> <p>Types of sexual misconduct include:</p> <p>(1) sexual assault,</p> <p>(2) sexual harassment,</p> <p>(3) sexual abuse, or</p>	<p>Examples of sexual misconduct prohibited under this Policy include, without limitation:</p> <p>(1) <b>Touching offenses.</b> Behaviors that include:</p> <p>(a) fondling an athlete’s breasts or buttocks</p> <p>(b) exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback) for sexual favors</p> <p>(c) genital contact</p> <p>(d) sexual relations or intimacies between persons in a position of trust, authority, and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sport participants.</p> <p>(2) <b>Non-touching offenses.</b> Behaviors that include:</p> <p>(a) a coach discussing his or her sex life with an athlete</p> <p>(b) a coach asking an athlete about his or her sex life</p> <p>(c) coach requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to athlete</p> <p>(d) exposing athletes to pornographic material</p> <p>(e) sending athletes sexually explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g. “sexting”)</p> <p>(f) deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts</p> <p>(g) deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared)</p> <p>(h) sexual harassment; specifically, the sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, and</p> <p>a. is unwelcome, offensive, or creates a hostile environment, and the offending individual knows or is told this</p>

<p>(4) any other sexual intimacies that exploit an athlete. <b>Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult</b>, and all sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.</p>	<p>b. is sufficiently severe or intense to be harassing to a reasonable person in the context.</p>
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**Comment**

**(1) Authority and Trust.** Once the unique coach-athlete relationship is established, the authority and trust on the part of the coach over the athlete shall be assumed, regardless of age. Accordingly, sexual interaction or intimacies between a coach and an athlete or other participant are prohibited, regardless of age, both during coaching and during that period following coaching if an imbalance in power could jeopardize effective decision-making.

**Imbalance of Power.** Factors relevant to determining whether there is an imbalance of power include, but are not limited to: (a) the nature and extent of the coach’s supervisory, evaluative or other authority over the athlete being coached; (b) the actual relationship between the parties; (c) the parties’ respective roles; (d) the nature and duration of the sexual relations or intimacies; (e) the age of the coach; (f) the age of the athlete or participant; (g) and whether the coach has engaged in a pattern of sexual interaction with other athletes or participants.

**Exception.** This section does not apply to a pre-existing relationship between two spouses or life partners.

**Bullying**

**Exceptions:** Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion. For example, bullying does not include verbal admonitions to encourage team members to train harder and to push through a difficult training regimen.

Prohibited Conduct	Examples
<p>(1) An 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</p>	<p>Examples of bullying prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:</p> <p>(1) <b>Physical behaviors.</b> Behaviors that include (a) hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, or slapping an athlete; (b) throwing at or hitting an athlete with objects such as sporting equipment.</p>

<p>physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish, or isolate the targeted athlete(s) as a condition of membership</p> <p>(2) Any act or conduct described as bullying under federal or state law</p>	<p>(2) <b>Verbal and emotional behaviors.</b> Behaviors that include (a) teasing, ridiculing, intimidating; (b) spreading rumors or making false statements; or (c) using electronic communications, social media, or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate, or humiliate (“cyber bullying”).</p>
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**Harassment**

**Exceptions:** None

<b>Prohibited Conduct</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<p>(1) A repeated 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 athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression or mental or physical disability; or</p> <p>(2) Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law</p>	<p>Examples of harassment prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:</p> <p>(1) <b>Physical offenses.</b> Behaviors that include (a) hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, or slapping an athlete or participant; (b) throwing at or hitting an athlete with objects including sporting equipment.</p> <p>(2) <b>Non-physical offenses.</b> Behaviors that include (a) making negative or disparaging comments about an athlete’s sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits; (b) displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols; (c) withholding or reducing playing time to an athlete based on his or her sexual orientation.</p>

## Hazing

**Exceptions:** Hazing does not include group or team activities that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors or (b) promote team cohesion.

Prohibited Conduct	Examples
<p>(1) 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; or</p> <p>(2) Any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law</p>	<p>Examples of hazing prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:</p> <p>(1) requiring or forcing the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs</p> <p>(2) tying, taping, or otherwise physically restraining an athlete</p> <p>(3) sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature</p> <p>(4) sleep deprivation, otherwise unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food</p> <p>(5) social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule</p> <p>(6) beating, paddling, or other forms of physical assault</p> <p>(7) excessive training requirements focused on individuals on a team</p>

**Comment.** Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of an athlete's willingness to cooperate or participate.

## WILLFULLY TOLERATING MISCONDUCT

It is a violation of this Athlete Protection Policy if a staff member and/or volunteer knows of misconduct, but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the athlete(s), participant(s), staff member, and/or volunteer.

## REPORTING

Although these policies are designed to reduce child sexual abuse and other misconduct, it can still occur. Staff members, volunteers, and participants of KCRC shall follow the reporting procedures set forth in KCRC's Reporting Policy (which is on page 21). **KCRC does not investigate suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse, or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations, as a condition of reporting suspicions or allegations to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.**

## VIOLATIONS

Violations of the Athlete Protection Policy shall be reported pursuant to our Reporting Policy and will be addressed under our Disciplinary Rules and Procedures.

## Strategy 4: Managing Training and Competition

### **SUPERVISION OF ATHLETES AND PARTICIPANTS**

During training and competition, KCRC strives to create two-deep leadership and minimize one-to-one interactions to create a safe training environment and to protect athletes and participants. However, there are situations when only one coach may be available to conduct and supervise club activities.

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

##### **Individual Meetings**

An individual meeting may be necessary to address an athlete's concerns, training program, or competition schedule. Under these circumstances, coaches, staff members, and/or volunteers are to observe the following guidelines:

- Any individual meeting should occur when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.
- Where possible, an individual meeting should take place in a publicly visible and open area, such as the corner of a gym or pool deck.
- If an individual meeting is to take place in an office, the door should remain unlocked and open.
- If a closed-door meeting is necessary, the coach, staff member, and/or volunteer must inform another coach, staff member, and/or volunteer and ensure the door remains unlocked.

##### **Individual Training Sessions**

An individual training session(s) with an athlete or participant may also be desired or necessary. Under these circumstances, written permission of a minor athlete's parents or guardians is required in advance of the individual training session(s), and KCRC encourages parents and guardians to attend the training session.

### **PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ATHLETES**

Appropriate physical contact between athletes and coaches, staff members, contractors, or volunteers is a productive and inevitable part of sport. Athletes are more likely to acquire advanced physical skills and enjoy their sport participation through appropriate physical contact. However, guidelines for appropriate physical contact reduce the potential for misconduct in sport.

#### **APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT**

KCRC adheres to the following principles and guidelines in regards to physical contact with our athletes:

##### **Common Criteria for Appropriate Physical Contact**

Physical contact with athletes – for safety, consolation, and celebration – has multiple criteria in common which make them both safe and appropriate. These include:

- the physical contact takes place in public
- there is no potential for, or actual, physical, or sexual intimacies during the physical contact
- the physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult

### **Safety**

The safety of our athletes is paramount and in many instances we make the athletic space safer through appropriate physical contact. Examples include:

- spotting an athlete so that they will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment
- positioning an athlete's body so that they more quickly acquire an athletic skill, get a better sense of where their body is in space, or improve their balance and coordination
- making athletes aware that they might be in harm's way because of other athletes practicing around them or because of equipment in use
- releasing muscle cramps

### **Celebration**

Sports are physical by definition and we recognize participants often express their joy of participation, competition, achievement, and victory through physical acts. We encourage these public expressions of celebration, which include:

- greeting gestures such as high-fives, fist bumps, and brief hugs
- congratulatory gestures such as celebratory hugs, "jump-arounds" and pats on the back for any form of athletic or personal accomplishment

### **Consolation**

It may be appropriate to console an emotionally distressed athlete (e.g., an athlete who has been injured or has just lost a competition). Appropriate consolation includes publicly:

- embracing a crying athlete
- putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging in an effort to calm the athlete ("side hugs")
- lifting a fallen athlete off the playing surface and "dusting them off" to encourage him or her to continue competition

### **PROHIBITED PHYSICAL CONTACT**

Prohibited forms of physical contact, which shall be reported immediately under our Reporting Policy include, without limitation:

- asking or having an athlete sit in the lap of a coach, administrator, staff member, or volunteer
- lingering or repeated embraces of athletes that go beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact



- slapping, hitting, punching, kicking, or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from an athlete
- “cuddling” or maintaining prolonged physical contact during any aspect of training, travel, or overnight stay
- playful yet inappropriate contact that is not a part of regular training, (e.g., tickling or “horseplay” wrestling)
- continued physical contact that makes an athlete obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed or not
- any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire for decreased or no physical contact, where such decreased contact is feasible in a competitive training environment.

## **VIOLATIONS**

Violations of this policy must be reported to a KCRC coach and the KCRC SafeSport Committee. Violations will be addressed under KCRC Disciplinary Rules and Procedures. Some forms of physical contact may constitute child physical or sexual abuse that **must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities.**

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

As part of KCRC’s emphasis on athlete safety, all electronic communications between a coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

**As with any communication, the content of electronic communications should be readily available to share with the athlete’s family. At the request of a parent or guardian, any email, electronic text, social media, or similar communication will copy or include the athlete’s parents or guardians.**

### **FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS, AND SIMILAR SITES**

Coaches may not have athletes of KCRC’s Team join a personal social media page. Athlete members and parents can friend the official KCRC’s Team page and coaches can communicate to athlete members through the site or a designated team app. All posts, messages, text, or media of any kind between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes.

### **TWITTER, INSTANT MESSAGING, AND SIMILAR MEDIA**

Coaches and athletes may “follow” each other. Coaches cannot “re-tweet” athlete message posts. All posts between coach and athlete must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

### **EMAIL AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. All email content between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

### **TEXTING AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Texting is allowed between coaches and athletes. All texts between coach and athlete must be professional and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

### **ELECTRONIC IMAGERY**

From time to time, digital photos, videos of practice or competition, and other publicly obtainable images of the athlete – individually or in groups – may be taken. These photos and/or videos may be submitted to local, state, or national publications, used in club videos, posted on club or club associated websites, or offered to the club families seasonally on disc or other electronic form. It is the default policy of KCRC to allow such practices as long as the athlete or athletes are in public view and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the athlete and the club. Imagery must not be contrary to any rules as outlined in KCRC's Participant Safety Handbook.

### **REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE ALL ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS OR IMAGERY**

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their children not be contacted by any form of electronic communication by coaches (photography or videography).

### **MISCONDUCT**

Social media and electronic communications can also be used to commit misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communications by coaches, staff, volunteers, administrators, officials, parents, or athletes will not be tolerated and are considered violations of our Participant Safety Handbook.

### **VIOLATIONS**

Violations of KCRC's Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy should be reported to the KCRC SafeSport Committee. Complaints and allegations will be addressed under KCRC's Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

## **LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS**

The following guidelines are designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas.

### **FACILITIES**

The following is a description of our practice and competition facilities to allow athletes and their families to plan their use:

**KCRC regularly practices at:**

Wyandotte County Lake Park in Kansas City, KS.

There are no locker room or changing facilities. Athletes will be expected to come dressed for practice and to change and shower at home.

**Indoor training practices are held at:**

Mill Creek Activity Center, 6518 Vista Drive, Shawnee, KS.

This facility has a changing area that is shared with the general public. As such, there are likely to be people who are not associated with KCRC in the changing area around the time of practice.

**Regattas**

Regattas take place at various locations.

Athletes are expected to come dressed for the event and to change and shower at home or at their chaperoned accommodations.

**USE OF CELL PHONES AND OTHER MOBILE RECORDING DEVICES**

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras increase the risk for different forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. As a result, **THERE WILL BE NO USE OF A DEVICE'S RECORDING CAPABILITIES IN THE LOCKER ROOMS OR CHANGING AREAS.**

Violations of this policy will be addressed under the Disciplinary Rules and Procedures and may result in the sanctions as set forth therein, including temporary suspension from competition.

**TRAVEL**

Travel will be a standard aspect of our competitive season and KCRC has established policies to guide our travel, minimize one-on-one interactions, and reduce the risk of misconduct.

Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase athlete safety and improve the competitive experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience.

**LOCAL AND TEAM TRAVEL**

We distinguish between travel to training, practice, and local competition ("local travel"), and team travel involving a coordinated overnight stay ("team travel").

**Local Travel**

Local travel occurs when KCRC does not sponsor, coordinate, or arrange for travel. For local travel, athletes or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) are responsible for making all travel arrangements. In these instances, it is the responsibility of the athletes or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) to ensure the person transporting the athletes maintain all safety and legal requirements, including, but not limited to, a valid driver's license, proper insurance, well maintained vehicle, and compliance with all state laws.

In an effort to minimize one-on-one interactions, KCRC staff members, coaches and/or volunteers, who are not also acting as a parent, should not drive alone with an unrelated athlete and should only drive with at least two other athletes or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the athlete's parent or guardian in advance of travel. In any case where a staff member and/or volunteer is involved in the athlete's local travel, a parental release is required in advance. Efforts must be made to ensure that staff and/or volunteers are not alone with an athlete or participant, by, e.g., picking the athletes up in groups.

Coaches, staff members, and volunteers who are also an athlete's guardian may provide shared transportation for any athlete(s). We encourage guardians to pick up their athlete first and drop off their athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.

### **Team Travel**

Team travel is when overnight stays are required to participate in regattas. Team travel is strictly the responsibility of team parents and KCRC juniors. KCRC assumes no liability for transportation, hotel stays, or other components related to traveling to and from events.

In the event that KCRC juniors travel to or from an event with a KCRC coach, the rules stated above for local travel apply.

## Section 5: Responding to Abuse, Misconduct, and Policy Violations

### REPORTING POLICY

Every KCRC staff member and/or volunteer must report:

1. violations of the Participant Safety Handbook,
2. misconduct as defined in KCRC's Athlete Protection Policy,
3. suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse, and
4. violations of the KCRC Communications and Social Media Policy.

**As a matter of policy, KCRC does not investigate suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations as a condition for reporting to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.**

#### Reporting Child Physical or Sexual Abuse

##### ***Child Physical or Sexual Abuse***

Staff members and/or volunteers at KCRC are required to report suspicions or allegations of child sexual abuse by a colleague or co-worker, to:

1. an immediate supervisor,
2. the KCRC SafeSport Committee, and
3. the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

##### ***Grooming***

Because sexual abusers “groom” children for abuse – the process used by offenders to select a child, to win the child’s trust (and the trust of the child’s parent or guardian), to manipulate the child into sexual activity, and to keep the child from disclosing abuse – it is possible that a staff member and/or volunteer may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious, or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an immediate supervisor and a member of the KCRC SafeSport Committee.

##### ***Peer-to-Peer Sexual Abuse***

Approximately one-third of all child sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children and the obligation to report extends to peer-to-peer child sexual abuse. Whether or not a sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance of power or intellectual capabilities. **If you have any concerns that an interaction between children may constitute sexual abuse, report it to the appropriate law enforcement authorities and the KCRC SafeSport Committee immediately.**

#### Reporting Misconduct and Policy Violations

If any staff member and/or volunteer receives an allegation or observes misconduct or other inappropriate behavior, such as grooming, that is not reportable to the appropriate law

enforcement authorities, it is the responsibility of each staff member and/or volunteer to report their observations to:

1. an immediate supervisor and
2. the KCRC SafeSport Committee.

KCRC also encourages member parents, athletes, and other sport participants to communicate violations of KCRC's Participant Safety Handbook and/or allegations and suspicions of child physical and sexual abuse to the KCRC SafeSport Committee and the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

## **REPORTING PROCEDURE**

### **To Whom to Report**

Staff members and volunteers may report to their concerns to the KCRC SafeSport Committee. A staff member and/or volunteer may, and in many cases must, report any allegation of child physical or sexual abuse to relevant law enforcement authorities.

### **How to Report**

KCRC will take a report in the way that is most comfortable for the person initiating a report including an anonymous, in-person, verbal, or written report. Regardless of how you choose to report, it is helpful to KCRC for individuals to provide, at a minimum,

1. the name of the complainant(s),
2. the type of misconduct(s) alleged, and
3. the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct(s).

### ***Reporting Form***

Individuals reporting child physical or sexual abuse or other misconduct may complete an Incident Report Form. Information on this form will include:

1. the name(s) of the complainant(s),
2. the type of misconduct alleged,
3. the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct,
4. the dates, time, and location the misconduct was committed,
5. the names of other individuals who might have information regarding the alleged misconduct, and
6. a summary statement of the reasons to believe that misconduct has occurred.

KCRC will withhold the complainant's name on request, to the extent permitted by law. A copy of KCRC'S Reporting Form can be found at in the appendix of this document.

See Part 2, Sample Forms and Documents for a Sample Reporting Form

## **CONFIDENTIALITY, ANONYMOUS REPORTING AND BAD-FAITH ALLEGATIONS**

### **Confidentiality**

To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, KCRC will keep confidential the complainant's name on request, not make public the names of potential victims, the accused perpetrator, or the people who made a report of child physical and sexual abuse to the authorities.

### **Anonymous Reporting**

KCRC recognizes it can be difficult for an athlete, teammate, friend, or family member to report an allegation of misconduct and strives to remove as many barriers to reporting as possible.

**Anonymous reports may be made without the formality of completing an Incident Report Form:**

- by completing the Reporting Form without including the reporter's name
- by expressing concerns verbally to the KCRC SafeSport Committee
- through email, texts, or notes left for the KCRC SafeSport Committee.

**However, anonymous reporting may make it difficult for KCRC to properly address allegations.**

All suspicions of child physical or sexual abuse will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

### **“Whistleblower” Protection**

Regardless of outcome, KCRC will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. KCRC will not encourage, allow, or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, allow, or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions against a complainant will be considered a violation of our Participant Safety Handbook and grounds for disciplinary action.

### **Bad-Faith Allegations**

A report of abuse, misconduct, or policy violations that is malicious, frivolous, or made in bad faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of our Participant Safety Handbook and grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the allegation, a person making a malicious, frivolous, or bad-faith report may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings.

## **HOW REPORTS ARE HANDLED**

### **Suspicions or Allegations of Child Physical or Sexual Abuse**

#### ***Reporting to Law Enforcement and/or Child Protective Services***

An independent investigation can harm youth and/or interfere with the legal investigative process. KCRC, its staff members, and/or volunteers **do not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities.** As necessary, however, KCRC may ask a few

clarifying questions of the minor or person making the report to adequately report the suspicion or allegation to law enforcement authorities.

For mandatory reporting laws, visit [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov).

### ***Immediate Suspension or Termination***

When an allegation of child physical or sexual abuse is made against a staff member, youth, and/or volunteer, KCRC may immediately remove that individual from contact with any children in the program until the allegation has been investigated by an official agency. As necessary, KCRC may suspend or change the assignment of a staff member and/or volunteer.

A staff member or volunteer's failure to report to a KCRC coach or the KCRC SafeSport Committee is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of a staff member and/or dismissal of a volunteer.

## **DISCIPLINARY RULES AND PROCEDURE**

While KCRC endeavors to provide support and guidance to participants on a day-to-day basis, it is also important for KCRC to have a formal procedure for disciplinary action to address alleged violations of its policies and other inappropriate behaviors, which is consistent with KCRC's Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation.

### **APPLICATION**

This Policy is used to address the following allegations against staff members, athletes, participants and/or volunteers:

- Violations of KCRC's policies; and/or
- Child abuse (emotional, physical, or sexual) that does not involve an ongoing legal investigation or criminal prosecution.

### **DISCIPLINARY RULES**

KCRC recognizes that there are varying levels of misconduct. For example, physical and sexual misconduct are serious violations that may result in immediate dismissal. In contrast, a youth participant who tells a single sexually risqué joke constitutes less serious misconduct and depending on the circumstances, might be dealt with more appropriately through dialogue and a verbal warning. In all cases, KCRC's disciplinary procedures and actions will be proportionate, reasonable, and applied fairly and equally.

### **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

On receipt of an allegation, KCRC will determine in its discretion the appropriate steps to address the conduct based on several factors, including (i) the age of the complainant or victim, (ii) the age of the accused, and (iii) the nature, scope, and extent of the allegations.

KCRC will address allegations against a staff member and/or volunteer under its employment policies and procedures, Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation.



KCRC's disciplinary response will depend on the nature and seriousness of the incident and in extreme cases, misconduct will result in immediate summary dismissal, provided that the accused individual shall be advised of his or her right to a hearing. If the accused individual is a minor, KCRC will contact his or her parents or guardians.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Sanctions for violations of the Participant Safety Handbook will be proportionate and reasonable under the circumstances. In addition to day-to-day guidance, KCRC may take the following disciplinary actions, without limitation:

- Inform the individual's direct-line supervisor or, in the case of a youth participant, the youth's parent or guardian
- Provide the individual with guidance, redirection and instruction
- Temporary suspension from competition
- File a formal incident report
- Issue a verbal warning
- Issue a written and/or final written warning
- Implement a limited access agreement (e.g., limiting an individual's access to certain buildings or to youth)
- Provide informed supervision, where at least one staff member is informed of the allegation and is instructed to vigilantly supervise the accused participant or stakeholder in his or her interactions with the program and/or organization
- Engage in restorative practices (i.e., creation of a respectful and safe dialogue when a misunderstanding or harm has occurred)
- Suspend or terminate employment or membership

### **ONGOING EMPLOYMENT AND/OR PARTICIPATION**

On receipt of a credible and specific allegation of child abuse or other serious misconduct (e.g., physical and sexual abuse as defined in our Athlete Protection Policy), KCRC may immediately suspend or terminate the accused individual to ensure participant safety.

### **COMPLAINANT PROTECTION**

Regardless of outcome, KCRC will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. KCRC will not encourage or tolerate attempts to retaliate, punish, or in any way harm any individual(s) who report(s) a concern in good faith. Such actions will be grounds for disciplinary action.

### **BAD-FAITH ALLEGATIONS**

Any individual who alleges misconduct under the Participant Safety Handbook that, upon review, is determined to be malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith will be a violation of our Participant Safety Handbook. Bad-faith allegations may also be subject to criminal or civil proceedings.

## Section 6: SafeSport Program Monitoring

### **MONITORING YOUR STRATEGY**

By monitoring the interactions among staff, volunteers, athletes, and others, KCRC works to prevent, recognize, and respond to inappropriate and harmful behaviors as set forth in our Participant Safety Handbook, while reinforcing appropriate behaviors.

### **MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

KCRC monitors for compliance with its policies and procedures, including without limitation its Awareness Training, Travel, Locker Room and Changing Areas, and Physical Contact Policies.

### **MONITORING METHODS**

KCRC utilizes multiple monitoring methods to observe how individuals are interacting, including without limitation (1) formal supervision, including regular evaluations; and (2) informal supervision, including regular and random observation (e.g., roving and checking interactions throughout practices), and (3) maintaining frequent contact with staff members, volunteers, and athletes who interact off-site.

### **RESPONDING TO INTERACTIONS**

While KCRC has a formal reporting policy, staff members and volunteers should be prepared to respond immediately to inappropriate or harmful behavior, potential risk situations, and potential boundary violations.

Staff members and volunteers will redirect inappropriate behaviors to promote positive behaviors, confront inappropriate or harmful behaviors, and report behaviors if necessary.

### **REPORTING**

Staff members and volunteers are required to report policy violations, misconduct, and physical and sexual abuse consistent with KCRC's Reporting Policy.