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ASSOCIATION'S MISSION

Provide a well organized and managed baseball program which-

- provides a safe, wholesome environment where the children in our community can enjoy spare time and the sports experience.

GOALS

- Having fun,
- developing sound character, and
- the feelings of self esteem,
- confidence,
- friendship,
- trust and
- the accomplishment of goals

BACKGROUND OF SPORTS ABUSE

- Child SPORTS Abuse/Molestation in the world of youth sports has received much media attention over the past few years.
- No one knows for sure how often it occurs, however, when it does occur the impact to the child and the sports organization can be devastating.
- Medical professionals states that the effects of abuse may surface later.

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PROGRAM

- The purpose of this program is to reduce the liability risk and related negative publicity, expense, and trauma to the association during the course of implementing its mission and goals.
- The likelihood of such can be reduced by making the environment unsuitable for the sexual predator and/or abuser.
- The program will key in on the bare essentials of education, volunteer screening, policies, and program administration.
- The intent of this program is not to be all encompassing, but instead, to provide the framework of a basic workable program that is more likely to be implemented by a group of volunteers with limited resources and time.
- The simple framework of this program will not address all contingencies that are likely to be encountered. Therefore, these materials should be available and consulted frequently.
- Applicable in association to Volunteers-Citizens who perform the various functions entailed in the running of a league without pay including league officers and directors, committee personnel, coaches, managers, umpires, scorekeepers, concession workers, etc.
- Sports abuse may take many forms and may be the result of actions of other players, and non-association personnel during games or association functions. Association volunteers should be alert and immediately report such actions to their league commissioners and/or local police where applicable.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION AND SCREENING

- **Volunteer Application and Consent/Release Form to be completed by all Association volunteers.**
- **Random Criminal Background Check by Association.**

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TYPES OF SPORTS ABUSE –DEFINITIONS,EXAMPLES

1. **Verbal abuse** (ridicule or put-downs), and

2. **Emotional abuse** (threats to perform unreasonable tasks), and sexual abuse.

Emotional Abuse Behaviors that attack or break a child's self-worth and development. Examples: calling players names, making fun or putting someone down, saying things that hurt feelings or yelling.

Verbal and Emotional Abuse: Yelling or making the following statements:

- You're stupid;
- You're an idiot;
- You're an embarrassment;
- You are not worth the uniform you play in; etc.

3. **Physical abuse** (any hurting touching or excessive exercise used as punishment),

Physical Abuse Behaviors and actions that hurt someone's body that are not a part of the sport. Examples: hitting, kicking, slapping or shaking someone, throwing equipment at players, shaking or hitting athletes for making mistakes.

Physical Abuse: Besides the obvious examples of a coach hitting, kicking, throwing equipment, or shaking a player, the following:

- Behaviors seem violent versus disciplinary;
- Training practices become abusive
- Fighting is encouraged or ignored;
- Moves or actions, often associated with injuries are encouraged;
- Coaches teach improper techniques or encourage conduct which violates safety rules;

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- Coaches allow athlete(s) to become physically or verbally abusive;
- Behaviors result in injuries to athlete(s);

4. Sexual Abuse:

- physical assault, sexual battery, unwanted physical sexual contact,
- unwelcomed sexually explicit or offensive verbal communication, coercive or exploitive sexual contact, verbal sexual harassment, and/or
- sexualized attention or contact with a minor.

Sexual Abuse: An adult may not improperly sexualize touch by fondling various body parts. On the other hand, appropriate touching can be used when a young child needs comfort, reassurance, and support.

Methods used by Sexual Abusers for coercive verbal “attention getting”;

- Misuse of power and authority;
- Misuse of love and affection;
- Manipulation or tricks:

5. NEW-Philosophical Abuse¹

Inappropriate use of core philosophies.

Examples:

- win-at-all-costs mentalities,
- unsportsmanlike behaviors and
- condoning inequities in participation opportunities.

6. NEW-Neglect

Failure to provide basic or essential care to meet a child's needs.

Examples:

1. failure to practice,
2. encourage or work with a young athlete or

¹ May occur from parent pressure.

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3. to seldom give athletes opportunities to participate.

7. NEW -DRUG ABUSE

- Use of performance enhancing drugs crating changes in mood or behavior.
- Be alert for symptoms in teen athletes.

ASSOCIATION POLICIES ON CHILD ABUSE/MOLESTATION

Limit One On One Contact:

- It is this organization’s policy that no activities shall take place involving one on one contact between a single league volunteer and a child, if such activities can be practically avoided.
- Instead, a buddy system is encouraged where two (2) adults should always be present during practices, games, carpooling, and special events.

Prohibition of Sleepovers:

- All sleepovers activities are prohibited whether parties at parent’s homes, overnight parties, or traveling to away games. The organization doesn’t allow, endorse or approve, but parents can have a sleepover outside of auspices of the organization.
- Exceptions: Teams traveling to far away tournaments can have sleepovers if each child is either accompanied by his/her parent or is being supervised by two (2) adults who are in each other’s presence at all times.

Touch Policy:

- Touch is acceptable only if it is "respectful and appropriate". Some experts have adopted a no touch policy, but most experts believe that "no touch" is an over-reaction and is ultimately damaging in itself and not practical.

Take Home/Pick-Up:

- Take home/pick-up of athletes by league personnel is strongly discouraged because of the difficulty in limiting one on one contact between adult and child.
- Parents should provide transportation for their own children to and from scheduled events.

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- The league will clearly outline the expected start and end time for all events and communicate this with all parents. Parents should be instructed to make back-up plans in the event they can't provide transportation.

Child Abuse Prohibition:

- All forms of sports abuse contained in this program such as sexual, physical, verbal and emotional abuse are prohibited.
- Furthermore, no league volunteer will be allowed to participate if they have been convicted of an assault, molestation, indecency with a minor, athlete abuse, etc.

WARNING SIGNS OF SPORTS RELATED ABUSE/MOLESTATION

- **With some forms of PARENTAL CHILD abuse, there maybe physical indicators (example: with physical abuse, bruises, welts, broken bones) ALONG WITH THE LESS OBVIOUS.**
- **But most often the effects of SPORTS ABUSE are less obvious and volunteers should be aware of and on the alert for the examples and definition of Sports Abuse Types and the following:**

Sudden shifts in behavior or attitudes when outgoing child suddenly builds a protected, closed wall or a generally happy child becomes aggressive and angry or a trusting child becomes fearful may be an indication of abuse. In sports, this can show up as losing interest or wanting to drop out of sports or a sudden decline in ability or functions.

Please note that no indicators or symptoms are absolute. Many of these could be indicators of problems other than sports abuse. However, if some of these things are going on, consider them to be a red flag. One difficulty is that some signs are ambiguous. Children may respond in different ways and some may show no sign at all.

- **Some indicators include:**
 - *Disclosure by child. Most children won't just come out and say they have been abused, but instead, may hint at it.*
 - *Observations, complaints, concerns, or allegations about league volunteers.*
 - *Attitudes/behaviors expressed on the part of an adult that may be associated with inappropriate or abusive behavior (exist, racist, poor sense of athlete development, raging temper, extremely controlling, jealous, hypersensitive, poor sexual boundaries,*

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bullying, intimidating manner, unrealistic or inappropriate training practices and risks, etc.)

- *Unexplained/unlikely explanation of injuries.*
- *Extreme fear of a league volunteer;*
- *Extreme low self-esteem, self worth;*
- *A child's attachment to a coach/staff to the point of isolation from others;*
- *A coach/staff with an interest beyond caring concerns, special interest in a child (time, gifts, attention, obsession, unrealistic expectations)*
- *A child's desire to drop out without a clear explanation, or without one that makes sense;*
- *A child that misses a lot of practices or games with suspicious explanations or excuses.*

ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE/MOLESTATION AND OTHER POLICY VIOLATIONS

When Sports abuse occurs, or you are made aware of an incident that may be an incident of Sports Abuse.

Listen to what the PLAYER is saying.

Despite increased sensitivity to abuse, there is still a tendency to not listen to or blame the victims (player) instead of holding the person(s) accountable who may have committed an act of Sports Abuse:

Assess the Seriousness of the Situation:

Differentiate between:

- **Concern:**
 - When the person just needs to be heard and have some information clarified.
- **Complaint:**
 - When the person needs you to listen and may or may not want action taken if they feel you listened.
- **Allegation:**
 - Clarify if the allegation is:
 - appropriate, but unappreciated act;

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- inappropriate act, but not illegal act;
- illegal act that needs to be reported to law enforcement.
- **Disclosure:**
 - When the person tells you that abuse occurred or based on their actions gives you reason to believe abuse has occurred.

STEPS

1. Mandatory Reporting by a coach or volunteer:

- **COACHES WILL Immediately Report an Incident, Allegation, Concern, Complaint or Disclosure to Commissioner who will advise the President:**

2. Information Gathering by Association:

- By association Board or,
- Independent third Party, or
- Law enforcement.

3. Suspension/Termination:

- **Suspension:** Less egregious conduct on the part of the volunteer may result in a suspension or termination in accordance with bylaws.
- **Termination:** All volunteers who have been adjudicated guilty of a serious crime against person(s) such as child/sexual abuse will be immediately terminated.

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4. Association Duty to Disclose:²

- **Police**
- **Insurance Carrier**

² Volunteers and/or association Board may be required by state law to report suspected cases of child/sexual abuse.