



KEEP
LET US PLAY
SAFE

KEEP US SAFE

Reporting, Prevention Training and Prevention Procedures

A core value of the Charlotte Independence Soccer Club (CISC) is to promote the health, safety and welfare of our young athletes. As such, CISC strives to adopt cutting edge policies and practices designed to protect and support the mental, physical and emotional health of our club members.

I. BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION

On February 14, 2018 the “Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017” (S.534) was passed by Congress requiring youth sports organizations to implement the following steps toward preventing sexual abuse of minors:

- **Mandatory Reporting:** any adult — board member, employee, coach (paid or volunteer, head or assistant), team administrator/manager, or other volunteers —interacting with an amateur athlete in the program has a duty to report abuse and/or suspected abuse within a 24-hour period of awareness. **EVERY adult is a mandatory reporter.**
- **Prevention Training:** consistent training must be offered and provided to all adult members who are in regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors, and educational training for children to better understand appropriate vs. inappropriate behavior, both in terms of adult-to-child and child-to-child interaction.
- **Prevention Policies:** all youth sport organizations must establish reasonable procedures to limit one-on-one interactions between an amateur athlete who is a minor (under the age of 18) and an adult who is not their parent/guardian; anti-retaliation policies; and other relevant policies.

As a member of US Club, US Youth Soccer and US Soccer, CISC will enforce these steps for all of its programs, which extend efforts and policies already in place prior to the passing of this legislation.

These policies are evolving, as the key entities (The Center for Safe Sports, US Soccer, US Youth Soccer, US Club etc.) are still developing the training, oversight practices, policies, and procedures for implementation. Consequently, information on this page may be revised to comply with federal law as well as what is established by these governing bodies.

II. DEFINITIONS

- a. **Keep Us Safe Liaison**: means the participant appointed by Charlotte Independence Soccer Club to undertake the actions outlined within. The person currently assigned to this position is: Ellen Fiori; (704)899-4621; KeepUsSafe@independencesoccer.club
- b. **Family Members**: means parents, domestic partners, step-parents, grandparents, guardians, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and first cousins.
- c. **Participant**: means any coach, assistant coach, technical director, director of coaching or staff, team manager, referee, director, employee, officer, independent contractor, volunteer, team coordinator, team administrator, team treasurer, chaperone, or other individual (other than a "Youth Participant") who has direct or indirect contact with a Youth Participant through Sanctioned Activities.
- d. **Youth Participant**: means any minor (person of less than 18 years of age) who is a registered player of CISC or who is otherwise a player participant or minor referee in Sanctioned Activities.
- e. **Sanctioned Activities**: means matches, games, tournaments, practices, training sessions, tryouts, team meetings, and other similar activities conducted by CISC, communication in connection with the foregoing activities (other than interactions other than with Family Members); and overnight lodging in connection with the foregoing activities other than exclusively with Family Members.

III. MANDATORY REPORTING

- a. CISC has zero-tolerance for abuse of Youth Participants. “Abuse” means sexual or physical abuse of a Youth Participant, including all instances of Sexual Misconduct as defined in **Section (V)(b)(ii)** below.

- b. Reasonable suspicions of sexual or physical abuse/neglect should be reported to each of the following entities within a 24-hour period of awareness. Please have as much information available to provide, including the names of the involved parties (victim, perpetrator, witnesses, etc.), dates, details, etc.
 - i. **Local Law Enforcement: 911**
 - ii. **Local Child Protective Services:**
 - 1. Mecklenburg County: 980-31 HELPS (980) 314-3577)
 - 2. Iredell County 704-873-5631 ext 6005
After hours 704-878-3100

 - 3. Cabarrus County 704-920-1400
After Hours 704-920-3000
 - 4. Gaston County 704-862-7555
 - 5. York County 803-909-7446 press 1

 - iii. **CISC Keep Us Safe Liaison:** Ellen Fiori 704-899-4621 and/or via email to KeepUsSafe@charlotteindependence.org

c. **Reporting Obligations For Participants**

- i. **Reports of Abuse:** CISC has zero-tolerance for abuse of Youth Participants by Participants. “Abuse” means sexual or physical abuse of a Youth Participant, including all instances of Sexual Misconduct.

- ii. Each Participant who witnesses an event of Abuse (an “Event”) or reasonably suspects an event of Abuse (a “Suspected Abuse”), in either case in connection with a Sanctioned Activity, must promptly report the Event or Suspected Abuse (an “Abuse Report”) to the appropriate law enforcement authorities in compliance with federal, state and local laws. **Failure to make such an Abuse Report is a violation of this policy.** Additionally, failure to make such a report could result in a violation of federal, state or local laws.

- iii. The Participant making the Abuse Report, the Keep Us Safe Liaison and CISC must also comply with all federal, state and local laws applicable to reporting of Events and Suspected Abuse.

- iv. A Participant and/or Keep Us Safe Liaison after making an abuse report to law enforcement must forward the report to both U.S. Soccer and Safe Sport.
- v. CISC and Participants are not obligated and will not attempt to investigate allegations or suspicions of Abuse or to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations or suspicions as a condition of making reports to applicable federal, state or local authorities.

d. Reporting Other Acts of Prohibited Conduct:

- i. Each Participant who witnesses or reasonably suspects an act of PROHIBITED CONDUCT (other than Events or Suspected Abuse) (as defined in Section V(b) below), should promptly report such witnessed or suspected violations (“Policy Violations”) to the Keep Us Safe Liaison (a “Violation Report”).
- ii. **Failure to make a Violation Report is a violation of this Policy.**
- iii. A Keep Us Safe Liaison who receives a Violation Report shall promptly transmit the Violation Report to the CEO of CISC.
- iv. In the event a Keep Us Safe Liaison reasonably concludes that the Violation Report describes an instance of criminal misconduct, the Keep Us Safe Liaison should assist the Participant making the Violation Report in notifying law enforcement authorities. The Keep Us Safe Liaison will then notify the CEO of CISC.

IV. PREVENTION TRAINING

a. Mandatory Participant Training

i. Keep Us Safe Certification:

- 1. All Participants are REQUIRED to annually complete Safesport Training and Abuse Prevention Training to be eligible to be involved with players, teams, and programs.

2. **Proof of Certification:** Participants must provide CISC with proof of completion by emailing a “Certificate of Completion” to KeepUsSafe@independencesoccer.club .
3. Failure to complete the training prevents participation in CISC Sanctioned Activities in a role other than that of a Family Member.

ii. **Continuing Education**

1. Mandatory continuing education for participants related to Keep Us Safe will be provided by CISC throughout the year.

b. **Voluntary Parent Training**

- i. **Keep Us Safe Resources for Families:** Education of Family Members serves a vital role in the Keep Us Safe Program. Below are resources available to Family Members and CISC strongly recommends that you take advantage of these educational opportunities to help Keep our Players Safe.
 1. Pat’s Place, www.patsplacecac.org/
 2. Novant Health www.novanthealth.org/
 3. SafeSport www.safesport.org/
- ii. The U.S. Center for SafeSport provides parents a “Parent’s Guide to Misconduct in Sport” online course and a variety of toolkits, which address misconduct issues in sport and help parents ensure their children have the most positive and safest experience possible.
 1. [Toolkit for Parents of Youth Athletes of All Ages](#)
 2. [Toolkit for Parents of Preschool Children](#)
 3. [Toolkit for Parents of School-Age Children](#)
 4. [Toolkit for Parents of High School-Aged Adolescents](#)
 5. [Signs and symptoms of child abuse](#)
 6. [How to communicate with your child about misconduct](#)
 7. [Tips for local and overnight travel situations](#)

- c. **Resources For Youth Participants:** CISC is working with Pat’s Place, a child advocacy center, and Novant Healthcare to provide education and reporting services for our Youth Participants in a manner deemed age appropriate by experts in the field. Parents will be kept informed of the

content and timing of any education program made available by the CISC for Youth Participants.

V. **PREVENTION POLICIES:**

a. **Obligation to Stay Current:** Prevention policies are listed below and are subject to revision as best practices are identified and announced by CISC governing bodies. All Participants are responsible for staying up-to-date with policy revisions.

b. **Prohibited Conduct of Participants**

i. **Prohibited Substances:** Participants shall not be under the influence or consume alcohol or any illegal substance while participating in Sanctioned Activities. Participants shall not provide alcohol or drugs (illegal or otherwise) to Youth Participants.

ii. **Sexual Misconduct:** The following actions in connection with any Sanctioned Activity shall be deemed to constitute sexual misconduct (“Sexual Misconduct”).

1. **Nudity.** No participant should be nude in the presence of a Youth Participant who is not a Family Member.

2. **Sexually Oriented Conversations.** No Participant shall engage in sexually oriented communications with any Youth Participant.

3. **Sexually Oriented Materials.** No Participant should present or provide sexually oriented materials (e.g. magazines, other printed materials, videos, cell phone images etc.) to any Youth Participant.

4. **Sexually Oriented Physical Contact.** No participant may engage in sexually oriented physical contact with a Youth Participant. See PHYSICAL CONTACT for guidance.

iii. **Harassment.** No Participant should engage in harassment of any Youth Participant in connection with any Sanctioned Activity. “Harassment” is a repeated pattern of behaviors including foul or abusive language that are intended (i) to cause fear or humiliation, (ii) to offend or degrade, (iii) to create a hostile environment, or (iv) to establish inappropriate dominance or power over a Youth Participant and any conduct within the definition of “harassment” under applicable federal or state laws.

iv. **Hazing.** No Participant should engage in hazing of any Youth Participant in connection with any Sanctioned Activity. “Hazing” means (a) coercing, requiring, or intentionally tolerating any humiliating or dangerous actor omission that serves as a condition for a Youth Participant joining a group or being socially accepted by a group and (b) conduct within the definition of “hazing” under applicable federal and state laws. “Hazing” does not include group or team activities that are intended to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion.

v. **Physical Contact**

1. **Appropriate Physical Contact.** Appropriate physical contact between a Participant and a Youth Participant is an inevitable and productive part of youth sports. Such contact may occur in connection with training (positioning a Youth Participant’s body so an athletic skill is more quickly acquired), medical treatment (releasing muscle cramps), celebration (brief hug), consolation (arm around a distressed Youth Participant), or safety concerns (pulling a youth participant out of harm’s way). Physical contact with a Youth Participant in these appropriate circumstances should comply with the following principles:

- a. Physical contact should take place in public
- b. The Participant must structure the contact to avoid the potential for (or actual) sexually oriented intimacies during the physical contact (e.g. “side hugs” rather than front to front hugs); and
- c. The Participant must intend the physical contact to benefit the Youth Participant. Not the needs of the Participant.

2. **Inappropriate Physical Contact.** Certain physical contact is either (a) ill-advised in that it presents the appearance of inappropriate contact or (b) to a reasonable and objective observer would constitute sexually oriented physical contact, harassment or hazing. Examples of such contact include:

- a. Lingering or repeated embraces of a Youth Participant
- b. Slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or similar contact to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from a Youth Participant;

- c. Continued physical contact that makes a Youth Participant obviously uncomfortable; and
 - d. Any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire of a Youth Participant related to physical contact (where decreased or no physical contact is feasible in the context of the existing athletic environment).
- vi. **Misconduct Between Youth Participants:** Participants should be aware that sexual interaction between Youth Participants or between a Youth Participant and another minor within the context of Sanctioned Activities can constitute sexual abuse, whether such conduct constitutes sexual abuse depends on a variety of factors, including whether an imbalance of power (e.g. age difference, disparity in size, existence of physical or mental disability, etc.) is present. If a Participant has a concern that such an interaction has occurred and may constitute sexual abuse, the Participant should comply with Reporting Obligations set forth in Section III(c) above.

c. **Participant and Youth Participant Interactions**

- i. **Interaction Guidelines.** To further protect Youth Participants, as well as Participants, Participants must make every effort to avoid being alone with a child (unless their own child) during Sanctioned Activities. In particular, Participants must abide by the following guidelines:
 1. Do not drive alone with a Youth Participant in the car to or from Sanctioned Activities.
 2. Do not take a Youth Participant alone to the locker room, bathrooms or any other private room.
 3. Private conversations with Youth Participants should occur within the view of others, in the gym or on the field, instead of a private office.
 4. Participants should not socialize individually with Youth Participants outside of Sanctioned Activities without permission of the Youth Participant's parent or guardian.
 5. No child should be left alone at a training session or at any other time until they are picked up by their parent, older sibling, or other designated adult. It is recommended that the last adult, in addition to the coach or trainer, wait at the site as well until the child is picked up.

ii. Out-Of-Town Travel

1. **CISC Travel Policy:** CISC Travel Policy can be found at the following link: [Travel Policy](#)

iii. Electronic Communications, Social Media and Other

1. **Communications.** Electronic communications between a Participant and a Youth Participant must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating about Sanctioned Activities. Participants should observe the following guidelines on electronic communications with Youth Participants who are not Family Members.
 - a. All electronic communication between a Participant and a Youth Participant shall occur through CISC sanctioned electronic platform such as TeamSnap.
 - b. Participants (with the exception of Family Members) may not follow, “like”, comment on, direct message or otherwise communicate with a Youth Participant through a social media platform except those “team” platforms created solely for use by CISC Participants and Youth Participants.
 - c. A second adult (parent/guardian/Director) shall be copied on all electronic communications.
 - d. A Participant shall not request a Youth Participant to join the Participants personal social media platform. Group social media pages are acceptable but must include parents (or guardians) of Youth Participants
 - e. Encrypted messaging may not be used to “direct message” a Youth Participant.
 - f. Email and text messages between a Participant and Youth Participant should copy the Youth Participant’s parent or guardian, and group e-mails are recommended.
 - g. A parent or guardian of a Youth Participant may request that one or more Participants not contact the Youth Participant through one or more forms of electronic communications. Such requests must be honored.

2. **Imagery**. From time to time, digital photos, videos of training or competition, or other publicly obtainable images of a Youth Participant in a public setting may be taken by a Participant. This imagery may be used for athletic instruction, team videos or team websites or offered to Family Members of a Youth Participant. Such uses are permissible so long as the imagery is in the best interest of the Youth Participant and no identifiable personal information can be associated with such imagery (i.e., name, school, address etc.). A parent or guardian may request in writing that such imagery of a Youth Participant not be posted on team websites (understanding that group photography or videography may make honoring such a request impracticable without excluding the Youth Participant from some Sanctioned Activities where the imagery is produced). To the extent such a request is practicable it should be honored.

- d. **“Whistleblower” Protection**. Regardless of the outcome, it is the policy of CISC to support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. CISC will NOT encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual, group or organization to retaliate, punish, or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith or otherwise participates in an investigation (e.g., a witness). Such actions against a complainant, witness or other complainants will be considered a violation of CISC Keep Us Safe Program and grounds for disciplinary action and may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings.
- e. **Bad-Faith Allegations**. A report of abuse, misconduct or policy violation that is malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of CISC Keep Us Safe Policy 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.
- f. **Conflicts Of Interest**: Any person or organization that may have a conflict of interest because they are named in a complaint, are a witness to an allegation, are closely affiliated with the person accused of misconduct, or who may have other potential bias, are considered to have a conflict of interest in the investigation or outcome of the complaint, and shall be recused from participating in an investigation or other disciplinary process. The investigation and hearing process shall be handled by

persons that are reasonably disinterested and impartial to the matter and all other persons and the program involved.

VI. PROCEDURE UPON REPORTED VIOLATION

- a. **Abuse**. Any Participant who is (a) the subject of an Abuse Report or (b) is otherwise alleged to have engaged in an Event, in each case that becomes known to CISC shall be promptly suspended by CISC from participation in Sanctioned Activities. Such suspension shall continue during any pending investigation by applicable legal authorities.
- b. **Conviction**. Any Participant who is convicted of (or pleads guilty to) a crime a material element of which is Abuse of a Youth Participant in connection with Sanctioned Activities shall be prohibited from participation in Sanctioned Activities. Any Participant who is convicted (or pleads guilty to) a crime a material element of which is a Prevention Policy Violation occurring outside of a Sanctioned Activity shall also be prohibited from participation in Sanctioned Activities.
- c. **Discipline at Discretion of CEO**. Any Participant that admits to or is found to have engaged in a Prohibited Activity or Prevention Policy that does or does not rise to the level of criminal activity will be subject to discipline at the discretion of the CEO which can include but is not limited to warning, suspension, or termination.