

# GEORGIA SOCCER POLICY ON HARASSMENT AND ABUSE AND MOLESTATION OF PARTICIPANTS AND NON- PARTICIPANTS

## I. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

It shall be the policy of Georgia State Soccer Association (Georgia Soccer), in accordance with “The Kidsafe Program”, that no participant or non-participant in any Georgia Soccer event or activity shall harass, abuse or molest any other participant or non-participant in any Georgia Soccer event or activity. This policy prohibits not only actions that are severe enough to be potentially unlawful but also conduct and comments that are not severe enough to violate state or federal law but that are still inappropriate conduct by participants or non-participants in any Georgia Soccer event or activity. Additionally, no participant shall, in any Georgia Soccer event or activity, harass, discriminate, or otherwise abuse, any other participant or non-participant based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability.

Furthermore, no participant should imply or threaten that advances or request for sexual favors (or refusal thereof) will have any effect on an individual’s selection, advancement, or any other condition of participation in any Georgia Soccer program. All such conduct is strictly prohibited and will bring prompt and certain disciplinary action. No one has the authority to engage in this kind of unacceptable behavior, and Georgia Soccer will not tolerate it.

If a participant believes that he or she has been subjected to harassment or intimidation in violation of this policy, or a participant knows about it happening to others, the participant should, without fear of reprisal or retaliation, promptly report the incident following the reporting procedures described below.

Any form of child abuse, as defined by Georgia State law, including, but not limited to, child molestation, is prohibited by this policy. Reporting of child abuse and molestation is required by Georgia Law. Any instance must be reported as soon as practicable to law enforcement.

Retaliation or reprisal is expressly prohibited in any form against anyone for filing a complaint in good faith under this policy or for assisting in the inquiry into a complaint.

Definitions for terms used in this policy can be found in Addendum A.

Furthermore, sexual abuse awareness training is KEY to protecting soccer players from potential abuse. US Youth Soccer and Georgia Soccer have teamed up to provide sexual abuse awareness training to all coaches, staff members, and volunteers for Georgia Soccer affiliate members. The Georgia Soccer Board of Directors has mandated that all Georgia Soccer affiliated members are required to implement Abuse Prevention Training within their organizations, using the free Abuse Prevention Online Training system provided by Georgia Soccer and US Youth Soccer. Georgia Soccer’s Risk Management Committee requires anyone who receives a background check at your organization must also take the Abuse Prevention Training. If we can all become more aware of potential abuse, we can do more to prevent abuse.

## II. Abuse Prevention Online Training System

Each Georgia Soccer affiliated club will have access to an online control panel to train staff, coaches, trainers, and referees. The Control Panel will allow each club to manage, track, and renew Sexual Abuse Awareness Training.

Each Affiliate member club shall appoint an administrator who will access, set-up, and manage the Online Training System for the club. This representative can begin the process by going to [www.AbusePreventionSystems.com/USYS](http://www.AbusePreventionSystems.com/USYS).

Sign up using the code provided by Georgia Soccer

Records of the training shall be kept by the Affiliate member club in strict security for a period of one calendar year and renewed by each member annually before the July 1st. Affiliation Annual registration deadline. All records must be available for audit by the Association.

### III. Physical Contact

Physical contact should be limited to that necessary and appropriate to teach a skill, treat an injury, console or congratulate a player. In the instance of teaching a skill, minimal contact should be involved and none which places the adult in a position of power or intimidation.

A volunteer (other than a parent or legal guardian) alone in a one-on-one situation with a player is generally inappropriate or may be misconstrued as such. If an adult is alone with a player then the adult should do so in a visibly public site.

There are those volunteers who are expressive by using their hands to give a pat on the back, a rub of the head, or other acts of touching to show appreciation or indicate a job well done. In a public setting those acts are understood. Georgia Soccer acknowledges there are appropriate times and places for showing such affection.

However, there should be no such touching in a one-on-one situation. Even the hint of inappropriate contact with a player may be enough to create the impression of inappropriate contact with children. Volunteers/staff should act in a defensive mode so that there is no air of impropriety.

During an out-of-town tournament, a non-parent/custodian adult shall not share any sleeping arrangement with a player or players. Adults should respect the privacy of players. Adults should provide privacy to players in changing rooms, showers, and bathrooms.

Suspicious behavior by an adult or claims of a sexual nature shall be reported to law enforcement.

Molestation can be real, or the allegation can be a tool of revenge. Molesters can be registered at the local police department or they can exist for years without detection. Checking through records may or may not reveal a molester. Therefore, it is everyone's concern to deal with this issue.

It is Georgia Soccer's and US Youth Soccer Association's goal to exclude participation by those who have committed violent crimes or crimes that may bring an unnecessary risk to the health and well-being of the participants. Georgia Soccer will not knowingly allow the participation of anyone that has a history of molestation or other criminal activity wherein the health of kids may be jeopardized. On the other hand, Georgia Soccer will preserve individual rights and not allow for unjustified pursuit of rumor based claims on a person's character. The same standards will also apply to those criminal records which may reflect on an inability to work with other individuals or

kids.

Keeping the quality of volunteers with the best interest of the kids at heart is everyone's business. Everyone who volunteers on behalf of Georgia Soccer has certain responsibilities in this regard.

Staff responsibilities are:

1. Adhere to this policy.
2. Report any alleged improprieties to event manager.
3. If there are rumors about your conduct then please consult with a league official.
4. Complete the Participant Disclosure Statement form and follow the Background Screening Policy for volunteer and employment procedures.

#### IV. REPORTING PROCEDURES

1. A complaint by a victim or their representative, or a report by another person who is aware of a possible offense, is to be made to the police to local law enforcement. A person with knowledge of an incident having reasonable cause to believe that an illegal act has been committed by a participant or non-participant, or that the health, safety and welfare of participants is at risk is encouraged to report their concerns to law enforcement or child welfare services. Reports of criminal behavior or misconduct by a non-participant against a non-participant shall be reported to law enforcement if warranted.

#### ADDENDUM A: DEFINITIONS

1. "Georgia Soccer Staff member": a person employed or a volunteer of Georgia Soccer. This person can be a program or team staff member in authority of an event or group able to make decisions relative to this policy.
2. "Participant": any person(s) who are in any manner involved in the organization, operation, direction or support of a Georgia Soccer event, including but not limited to coaches, trainers, instructors, evaluators, administrators, chaperones, parents/guardians, field marshals, referees, volunteer support and players. Participant extends to visiting United States Soccer Federation (USSF) members (or guests of the USSF) in the event or activity, and event vendors where specified under contract as under control or jurisdiction of Georgia Soccer.
3. "Non-participant" is anyone who is not otherwise defined immediately above as a Participant.
4. Harassment, is defined as per Georgia State law, including, but not limited to, sexual harassment, more specifically includes definitions as follows:

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- a. Verbal harassment such as making graphic or degrading comments about an individual's body or personal characteristics, or using epithets, derogatory comments or slurs. Sexual

- advances, propositions of a sexual nature and vulgar talk or jokes are prohibited.
- b. Physical harassment is an assault, unwanted touching, physical interference with normal work.
  - c. Visual harassment is the display of sexually oriented, sexually suggestive, or sexually explicit objects. Also, the display of sexually degrading or pornographic posters, pictures, cartoons, drawings, screen savers, other graphic materials of a sexual nature, or inappropriate gestures.
  - d. Written communications such as sending inappropriate jokes or comments in print or electronic form.
5. "Child" is defined under Georgia Law as a person less than eighteen (18) years of age
6. "Child molestation" is defined under Georgia Law and can include without limitation the following:
- a. Any immoral or indecent act by a person to, or in the presence of, any child with the intent to arouse or satisfy the sexual desire of either the child or the person.
  - b. By means of an electronic device, transmission of images of a person engaging in, inducing, or otherwise participating in any immoral or indecent act to a child with the intent to arouse or satisfy the sexual desire of either the child or the person.