

**USA YOUTH AND HIGH SCHOOL RUGBY  
(A District of Columbia Non-Profit Corporation)**

**VOLUNTEER ELIGIBILITY POLICY  
&  
YOUTH SAFETY POLICIES**

**I. Purpose**

The Board of Directors of USA Youth and High School Rugby believes our highest priority is the safety of our young athletes. Abuse of any kind is unacceptable; abuse against a minor is particularly reprehensible. This includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, mental and emotional abuse, any type of bullying, hazing or harassment, and grooming.

We insist all our affiliate organizations strive with us to create and maintain a culture of zero-tolerance for all forms of misconduct and abuse directed toward anyone, principally our young athletes. The principal ways we can create and maintain a healthy culture and environment for our players are 1) a clear policy for volunteer eligibility, 2) an effective screening process of adult volunteers, 3) robust abuse reporting procedures, and 4) on-going training and education in abuse prevention and awareness.

The following is the policy of USA Youth and High School Rugby designed to create a healthy, safe culture for our young players. Each individual member and each rugby organization affiliated with, or a member of, USA Youth and High School Rugby must follow this policy.

**A. Definitions.**

In the following policies, the following terms shall have the meanings respectively ascribed herein.

**“Local Affiliate Organization” or “LAO”** means any rugby organization affiliated with USA Youth and High School Rugby including, but not limited to, rugby clubs and teams, state rugby organizations, interscholastic leagues and varsity programs.

**“Membership”** means registration with USA Youth and High School Rugby as a volunteer.

**“Minor Athlete”** means a rugby player who is under the age of 18.

**“Rugby Activity” “Rugby Activities”** means any rugby training, practice, scrimmage, match, game, instruction, tournament sanctioned by USA Youth and High School Rugby, and travel to and from any one of those activities.

**“SafeSport”** means the U.S. Center for SafeSport, Inc.

**“Volunteer”** means an individual who, with or without compensation, is authorized by USA Youth and High School Rugby to coach or referee in any rugby activity; acts as club administrator, board member, officer, or employee of any Youth Rugby Organization; or who is otherwise authorized by a Youth Rugby Organization to have regular contact with minor athletes.

**“Youth Rugby Organization”** or **“YRO”** means USA Youth and High School Rugby and any of its LAOs.

## **B. VOLUNTEER ELIGIBILITY POLICY**

**1. Eligibility.** Unless disqualified, any adult is eligible to volunteer for USA Youth and High School Rugby and any of its LAOs. Some volunteer positions such as coach and referee will have additional eligibility requirements.

### **2. Mandatory Disqualification:**

- a. An individual is disqualified and prohibited from serving as a Volunteer if the person has been found guilty of any of the following crimes, regardless of amount of time since the offense:
  - i. Any offense against a child; or
  - ii. Any sexual offense.
- b. An individual is disqualified and prohibited from serving as a Volunteer if the person has been found guilty of the following crimes in the past ten (10) years: Any felony.
- c. An individual is disqualified and prohibited from serving as a Volunteer if the person has been found guilty of any of the following crimes in the past seven (7) years:
  - i. Any misdemeanor involving violence (Examples include: simple assault, battery, domestic violence, hit & run, etc.); or
  - ii. Two or more misdemeanor drug or alcohol-related crimes (Examples include: driving under the influence, simple drug possession, drunk and disorderly, possession of drug paraphernalia, etc.)
- d. An individual is disqualified and prohibited from serving as a Volunteer if the person has been found guilty of any of the following crimes in the past five (5) years:
  - i. Any misdemeanor that would be considered, in the sole and absolute discretion of USA Youth & High School Rugby, USA Rugby, or their agents or employees, a potential danger to children or may indicate lack of integrity or character of an Individual (Examples include: child endangerment, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, providing alcohol to minors, aiding and abetting a minor to commit a violation of the law; embezzlement).
- e. An individual is disqualified and prohibited from serving as a Volunteer and shall be immediately suspended if the individual or Volunteer
  - i. is listed on the SafeSport Centralized Disciplinary Database;

- ii. is listed on the USA Youth & High School Rugby Ineligible Volunteer List;  
or
- iii. has been disqualified or prohibited from contact with minors by any youth organization, by any school or school district, or by any federal, military, state or local government agency.

**3. Conditional Disqualification:** An individual shall be disqualified and ineligible from volunteering, until and unless reinstated pursuant to Paragraph 4, if the individual:

- a. is or becomes under investigation by any law enforcement agency for any allegation involving child abuse, including sexual abuse, child endangerment, or child neglect;
- b. is or has been charged with a crime in which a minor is involved or is a victim;  
or
- c. is or becomes under investigation for prohibited conduct against or involving a minor by any non-law enforcement agency or organization including, but not limited to, any child protection agency, SafeSport, USA Rugby, USA Youth and High School Rugby, or any other organization; or
- d. fails to comply with all applicable USA Youth and High School Rugby and SafeSport training and education requirements.

**4. Reinstatement after Disqualification.** An individual who is ineligible to volunteer through conditional disqualification pursuant to Paragraph 3 may be eligible to volunteer only if, and to the extent applicable:

- a. the law enforcement investigation under Paragraph 3(a) results in no charges against the individual;
- b. the charge under Paragraph 3(b) does not result in a plea or verdict of guilty;
- c. the non-law enforcement investigation under Paragraph 3(c) results in a finding of 'not-substantiated' or a similar conclusion and no disciplinary or enforcement action is taken against the individual; and
- d. The volunteer satisfies all applicable USA Youth and High School Rugby and SafeSport training and education requirements.

**5. Discretionary Disqualification.** An individual may be disqualified and ineligible to volunteer if:

- a. the individual is charged with a crime or has a criminal background that is not disqualifying pursuant to Paragraph 2 or 3 above; or
- b. there exist other factors or considerations concerning the individual that may reasonably warrant disqualification;  
and
- c. the board of directors of the reviewing YRO determines in its discretion that the individual presents an undue risk to minor athletes or other volunteers.

**6. Discretionary Disqualification Procedure.** The board of directors of a YRO reviewing the eligibility of an individual to whom Paragraph 5 applies shall detail in

writing the decision of the board of directors and include any conditions required to restore eligibility.

**7. Action Upon Information of Disqualifying Condition.** Upon receipt of information that a volunteer is or should be disqualified pursuant to Paragraph 2, 3 or 5, the YRO shall immediately notify the volunteer that they are no longer permitted to act as a volunteer, to attend rugby activities, or to have contact with minor athletes. The YRO shall immediately notify USA Youth and High School Rugby of its decision. Depending on the source and credibility of the information, before disqualifying a volunteer, a YRO may make reasonable efforts to confirm the information and shall document such efforts. If the YRO cannot confirm but cannot repudiate the information, the YRO shall report the matter to USA Youth and High School Rugby. Any volunteer who has been disqualified and ineligible to volunteer shall be identified on a list of ineligible volunteers maintained by USA Youth and High School Rugby.

**8. Information Sharing.** A YRO which rejects a volunteer application or suspends or revokes the membership of a volunteer shall notify USA Youth and High School Rugby which shall place the individual's name on a list of individuals who are ineligible to volunteer for any LAO of USA Youth and High School Rugby.

### C. VOLUNTEER APPLICATION AND SCREENING POLICY

**1. Authorized Individuals.** Only individuals who have been properly screened and approved pursuant to this policy and other policy may be allowed to volunteer for a Youth Rugby Organization.

**2. Volunteer Requirements.** Every individual who wishes to volunteer must comply with the following requirements each year before having contact with minor athletes:

- a. Annually register as a member with USA Youth and High School Rugby;
- b. Annually submit a completed and signed volunteer application;
- c. Bi-annually provide a government-issued photo identification (e.g. driver's license or passport);
- d. Bi-annually submit to and pass a background check as prescribed by the Youth Rugby Organization; and
- e. At all times comply with child abuse prevention and reporting training requirements.

**3. Approval, Additional Qualifications.** Refusal to comply fully with Paragraph 2 shall result in the immediate rejection of a volunteer application. Individuals wishing to volunteer in certain capacities such as coach and referee, must meet additional eligibility requirements specific to their respective positions.

**4. Background Check.** USA Youth & High School Rugby will conduct or have conducted a background check on each volunteer applicant pursuant to adopted policy.

**5. Application Review.** USA Youth & High School Rugby and/or USA Rugby will review the volunteer application and approve or reject the application based upon the volunteer eligibility criteria. The name of an individual whose volunteer application has been rejected shall be placed on a list of ineligible volunteers, which shall be maintained by USA Youth and High School Rugby.

**6. Transferring Volunteers.** Any LAO that receives a transfer request from a volunteer from another LAO shall check with USA Youth and High School Rugby to ensure the volunteer has not been disqualified or suspended

## **D. YOUTH SAFETY POLICIES**

### **A. Prohibited Conduct Policy**

Federal and state laws prohibit any USA Youth and High School Rugby volunteer from engaging in any conduct that is or may be considered “child abuse.” Child abuse often includes but is not limited to sexual abuse or harassment, physical abuse, and emotional abuse. It is vital to the health of youth rugby that every USA Youth & High School Rugby volunteer understand what laws apply to them and what is abuse.

In addition, USA Youth & High School Rugby complies with the SafeSport Code of Conduct. Some behavior may not rise to the level of “child abuse” under applicable state or federal law but may nevertheless be “prohibited conduct” according to the Code of Conduct. Accordingly, all volunteers are required to know what conduct is considered “prohibited conduct” under the SafeSport Code of Conduct.

### **B. Interactions with Minors Policy**

Every volunteer should take care that they are never alone with a minor athlete who is not their own child and that they are always in an area where they can be observed by others. USA Youth and High School Rugby is subject to and adopts SafeSport’s Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy of one-on-one interactions, including communications with minor athletes, in its entirety, including its recommended components. The text of that policy is attached to this document and made a part of this policy. Each LAO must adopt its own reasonable procedures to limit one-on-one interactions, including communications, between adult volunteers and minor athletes.

### **C. Abuse Reporting and Investigations Policy**

- 1. Mandatory Child Abuse Reporting.** USA Youth & High School Rugby adopts as a policy the mandatory reporting requirements contained in Section 226 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20341) (“Child Abuse Act”).

Under this policy, all volunteers registered with USA Youth and High School Rugby who have regular contact with minor athletes must report to proper law enforcement authorities within 24 hours any suspected child abuse. The definition of “child abuse” under the Child Abuse Act is very broad and includes sexual abuse and mental injury. In addition, volunteers are subject to their respective state laws concerning the reporting of suspected child abuse. It is critical that all volunteers understand and comply with the mandatory reporting requirements imposed upon them by this policy and by applicable state and federal law.

2. **Reporting Abuse to SafeSport.** Every volunteer who reports suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, and the alleged abuser is a volunteer of a Youth Rugby Organization, the reporting volunteer must also report the allegation to SafeSport and to USA Youth & High School Rugby.
3. **Reporting Other Prohibited Conduct.** Some conduct involving minors such as emotional abuse, bullying, harassment may not be “child abuse” under Section 226 of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (34 U.S.C. 20341) but may nevertheless be “prohibited conduct” under the SafeSport Code of Conduct. Any volunteer for a Youth Sports Organization who witnesses or suspects another volunteer has engaged in conduct that does not require mandatory reporting under applicable state or federal law, but which is nevertheless conduct prohibited by the SafeSport Code of Conduct, must report that conduct and the suspected abuser to SafeSport and to USA Youth & High School Rugby.
4. **Consulting Legal Counsel.** USA Youth & High School Rugby highly recommends that any Youth Sports Organization that receives a report of abuse or of prohibited conduct immediately consult with competent legal counsel to help guide its response. All Youth Rugby Organizations should be careful to consider their legal obligations under this policy, all other applicable local, state and federal laws, as well as the confidentiality considerations of handling such reports.
5. **Investigations.** No LAO should attempt to investigate suspected abuse or misconduct on its own. The following are agencies that are permitted to investigate suspected abuse or misconduct by a volunteer: local law enforcement, local child protection agencies, SafeSport, USA Rugby, USA Youth & High School Rugby, or the school, school district or league, or government agency of which the LAO is a part. However, all participants are required to cooperate fully in any investigation.
6. **Retaliation Prohibited.** No Youth Rugby Organization shall retaliate in any way against a person who in good faith makes a report of suspected child abuse, including any sexual abuse, physical abuse, or emotional abuse, or of conduct prohibited by the SafeSport Code of Conduct. Any volunteer who retaliates or takes any adverse action against a person for making any such report and any volunteer who uses or attempts to use the mechanisms of a Youth Rugby Organization to retaliate against the reporting person may have their membership revoked or suspended.

### **G. Continuing Training Requirements Policy**

Every volunteer who is in regular contact with minor athletes must attend all regular training concerning the prevention and reporting of child abuse as may be required by USA Rugby, SafeSport, and/or USA Youth & High School Rugby. Any volunteer who does not comply with child abuse prevention and reporting training requirements may be suspended from participation until they return to compliance.