

# Athlete Protection Policy

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Procedures and reporting forms

1/30/2019

## **Medstar NRH Adapted Sports Policy**

1. Programs are open to anyone in the Washington Metropolitan area with a physical disability. Interested participants are pre-screened by coaches to determine eligibility for sports including type of disability. Participants, who don't meet criteria to compete, can participate in weekly practices if appropriate and approved by coaches. Players outside Washington Metropolitan area are considered on a case by case basis.
2. Each participant completes a Medstar NRH waiver including medical emergency information before participating. Participant also completes membership registration with national organization if required. (Sled Hockey players must join US Hockey to participate. To compete, players in basketball and wheelchair rugby must register with NWBA and USQRA). Participants are provided MNRH Athlete
3. Practice and Game schedules are communicated through email, Facebook page and Medstar NRH website. Attached is agreement signed by players at start of season, regarding attendance and participation in fundraising events.
4. All programs are offered at no cost to participants. As part of player agreement, players agree to participate in designated amount of fundraising to help fund the program.
5. Players do cover cost of transportation to local games and tournaments. Medstar NRH Adapted Sports program covers tournament registration fees, hotels and a portion of travel for long distance tournaments and games.
6. All coaches and regular volunteers are screened according to Medstar NRH community volunteer program including background checks. All coaches and regular volunteers complete online Safe Sport training, and any additional certifications required by their sport organization. All coaches and volunteers are trained in transfers, disability awareness and safety procedures.

### **Mission:**

MedStar NRH is dedicated to making it possible for individuals of all abilities to lead active, healthy, and fulfilling lifestyles. Our mission is to facilitate healthy lifestyles through sports for individuals with physical disabilities and to increase community awareness of the benefits of adapted sports.

### **Program Goals:**

1. To provide quality adapted sports clinics on a weekly basis with opportunities to compete on a local and national level for individuals in the Washington DC Metropolitan area.
2. To provide trained coaches/ volunteers and specialized equipment at accessible facilities for sports clinics.
3. To increase awareness of adapted sports by providing introductory sports clinics, adapted sports camp, adapted sports presentations at local organizations and through social media.

## MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital Adapted Sports Program

### Athlete Sponsorship Responsibilities & Guidelines

**Medstar NRH's Adapted Sports program has a dual mission. One: to facilitate healthy lifestyles through sports for individuals with physical disabilities. Two: to increase community awareness of the benefits of adapted sports. As a part of our team, we expect you to positively represent Medstar NRH during all sporting and outreach events. We will provide opportunities to compete locally and regionally, qualified coaches, specialized equipment and training sessions. To be a part of our team, the following contract must be signed.**

#### **Athlete Contract:**

I understand that when traveling with the MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital Adapted Sports Program I represent the interests of the MedStar National Rehabilitation Network, the United States Paralympics, and other sponsoring organizations. I will conduct myself with integrity; my actions will not deface the image or interests of our sponsoring organizations. I understand that my role within the MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital Adapted Sports Program is a privilege. My participation with the program and traveling will be contingent upon meeting the following responsibilities, including but not limited to:

- Regular attendance at team practices (at least 70%, unless excused by coach)
- Regular attendance at disability awareness events, fundraisers, and other scheduled team events
- Must raise at least \$300 for adaptive sports program
- Must be physically fit and trained for competition
- Must be on time to practices and tournaments, or actively notify coach or other personnel prior.
- Treating teammates, coaches, managers, officials, and opposing teams with respect
- Review and adhere to MedStar NRH Adapted Sports program's Athlete Protection policy
- Maintaining my equipment to the best of my ability (rugby chair, uniform, etc.) and seeking assistance with maintenance when needed
- Refraining from actions which are detrimental to the MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital Adapted Sports Program, my teammates, coaches, my performance within my sport
  - Detrimental actions include, but are not limited to: alcohol or drug abuse, physical threats, abusive language, fights, damage to other organization's property and equipment, and/or the mistreatment of other persons.

I agree that the MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital Adapted Sports Program is not responsible for my actions should I violate the rights or personal property of other persons or organizations. The MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital Adapted Sports Program reserves the right to suspend me and/or release me from the team should I violate any of the abovementioned agreements.

Signature of Athlete: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **TRAVEL GUIDELINES**

Travel will be a standard aspect of our competitive season and MNRH Adapted Sports Program (MNRH) 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 MNRH 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 athlete or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) to ensure the person transporting the athlete maintains 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, MNRH staff members, coaches and/or volunteers, who are not also acting as a parent, should not drive alone with an unrelated minor 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 are 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. We also recommend completing a shared travel declaration form signed by the parents/guardians of any minor athlete who is being transported as part of such a carpool arrangement.

#### **Team Travel**

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when MNRH sponsors, coordinates or arranges for travel so that our teams can compete locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers and chaperones will often travel with the

athletes. However, no coach, staff member, or volunteer will engage in team travel without the proper safety requirements in place, including valid drivers' licenses, proper insurance, well-maintained vehicles and compliance with all state laws.

MNRH strongly encourages minor athlete's family in away travel, unless family designates another adult as guardian, *providing permission*.

For team travel, hotels and air travel will be booked in advance by MNRH. Athletes will share rooms, with 2-4 athletes assigned per room depending on accommodations. For minor athletes, MNRH assigns one room per athlete and family.

### **INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL [for SPORT INVOLVING INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION AND TRAVEL]**

The nature of our sport and competition structure means that individual athletes may sometimes need to travel overnight without other athletes. Under these circumstances, we encourage minimizing one-on-one time between a coach and athlete by:

1. Traveling with an additional coach or chaperone chosen by parents/guardian.
2. Strongly suggesting parents/guardians to travel with their minor athlete, or assign a guardian (for athletes under age 18)

When only one athlete and one coach travel to a competition, *the athlete must have his or her parents' or legal guardian's written permission in advance to travel alone with the coach*.

### **TRAVEL NOTIFICATION**

When possible, MNRH will provide reasonable advance notice before team travel. Notice will include the dates, location and duration of competition. Travel notice will also include designated team hotels for overnight stays as well as a contact person within MNRH. This individual will be the point of contact to confirm your intention to travel and to help with travel details.

MNRH will post specific travel itineraries when they become available. These will include a more detailed, hour-by-hour itinerary as well as contact information for team travel chaperones.

### **MIXED-GENDER AND MIXED-AGE TRAVEL**

MNRH is made up of male and female athletes across various ages. Athletes will only share a room with other athletes of the same sex and age group. Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).

**COACH AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

During team travel, coaches and staff members will help athletes, fellow coaches and staff members adhere to policy guidelines, including, without limitation, the Travel Policy, Locker Rooms and Changing Areas Policy and Reporting Policy. If a coach or staff member transports an athlete or other organization member in their private car for team travel, a copy of the coach's or staff member's valid driver's license is required.

# 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 team manager, MedStar NRH Adapted Sports Director or MedStar NRH Volunteer Coordinator

MNRH Adapted Sports program (MNRH) 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.

**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 immediate supervisor, MNRH Adapted Sports Director or MNRH Volunteer Coordinator. Complaints and allegations will be addressed under MNRH Adapted Sports Program Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

MNRH Adapted Sports program recognizes that the process for training and motivating athletes will vary with each coach and athlete, but it is nevertheless important for everyone involved in sport to support the use of motivational and training methods that avoid misconduct.

### Application

This Policy applies to

- Staff members, coaches and volunteers
- MNRH Adapted Sports program athletes and participants.

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**

- (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.

**Note concerning peer-to-peer child sexual abuse:** 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.

- (2) Any act or conduct described as child sexual abuse under federal or state law.

### ***Exception***

None

### ***Examples***

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.

### **Emotional Misconduct**

- (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:
  - a. verbal acts
  - b. physical acts
  - c. acts that deny attention or support

- (2) Any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect).

### ***Exception***

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

### ***Examples***

Examples of emotional misconduct prohibited by this policy include, without limitation:



- (1) **Verbal Acts.** 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.
- (2) **Physical Acts.** A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as (a) throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, participants; or (b) punching walls, windows or other objects.
- (3) **Acts that Deny Attention and Support.** A pattern of (a) ignoring an athlete for extended periods of time or (b) routinely or arbitrarily excluding participants from practice.

***Note: Bullying, harassment, and hazing, defined below, often involve some form of emotional misconduct.***

### **Physical Misconduct**

- (1) Contact or non-contact conduct that results in, or reasonably threaten to, cause physical harm to an athlete or other sport participants; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. child abuse, child neglect, assault).

### ***Exceptions***

Physical misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athlete performance. For example, hitting, punching, and kicking are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports, but have no place in swimming.

### ***Examples***

Examples of physical misconduct prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:

- (1) **Contact offenses.** Behaviors that include:
  - (a) punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete;
  - (b) intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment;
  - (c) providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age (under U.S. law);
  - (d) providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete;
  - (e) encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play pre-maturely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional;

(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.

(2) **Non-contact offenses.** Behaviors that include:

(a) isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space);

(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);

(c) withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.

***Note: Bullying, harassment and hazing, defined below, often involve some form of physical misconduct.***

### **Sexual Misconduct**

(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;

(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

(3) Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape)

**Note: An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete.**

### ***Types of Sexual Misconduct***

Types of sexual misconduct include:

(1) sexual assault,

(2) sexual harassment,

(3) sexual abuse, or

(4) any other sexual intimacies that exploit an athlete. **Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult**, and all sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

### ***Exceptions***

None

### ***Examples***

Examples of sexual misconduct prohibited under this Policy include, without limitation:

(1) **Touching offenses.** Behaviors that include:

- (a) fondling an athlete's breasts or buttocks
- (b) exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback) for sexual favors
- (c) genital contact
- (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.

**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.

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

**(2) Non-touching offenses.** Behaviors that include:

- (a) a coach discussing his or her sex life with an athlete
- (b) a coach asking an athlete about his or her sex life
- (c) coach requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to athlete
- (d) exposing athletes to pornographic material
- (e) sending athletes sexually explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g. "sexting")
- (f) deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts
- (g) deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except in situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared)
- (h) sexual harassment; specifically, the sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, and
  - a. is unwelcome, offensive or creates a hostile environment, and the offending individual knows or is told this
  - b. is sufficiently severe or intense to be harassing to a reasonable person in the context.

## **Bullying**

- (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 physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership
- (2) Any act or conduct described as bullying under federal or state law

## **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.

## **Examples**

Examples of bullying prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:

- (1) **Physical behaviors.** 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.
- (2) **Verbal and emotional behaviors.** 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”).

## **Harassment**

- (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
- (2) Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law

## **Exceptions**

None

## **Examples**

Examples of harassment prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:

- (1) **Physical offenses.** 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.
- (2) **Non-physical offenses.** 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.

### **Hazing**

- (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
- (2) Any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law

### **Exception**

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

### **Examples**

Examples of hazing prohibited by this Policy include, without limitation:

- (1) requiring, forcing or otherwise requiring the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs
- (2) tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining an athlete
- (3) sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature
- (4) sleep deprivation, otherwise unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food
- (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
- (6) beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault
- (7) excessive training requirements focused on individuals on a team

**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 MedStar NRH Adapted Sports program shall follow the reporting procedures set forth in MedStar NRH Adapted Sports program Reporting Policy. **MedStar NRH Adapted Sports program 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 Procedure.

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

As part of MedStar NRH Adapted Sports program'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 any electronic communication 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 minor athletes of MedStar NRH Adapted sports program join a personal social media page. Athlete members and parents can friend the official MedStar NRH Adapted Sports Team page and coaches can communicate to athlete members through the site. 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 MedStar NRH's Adapted Sports program 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 MedStar NRH Adapted Sports program's Participant Safety Handbook. A photo waiver is included in our waiver.

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

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child 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 MedStar NRH Adapted Sport's Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy should be reported to your team manager, MedStar NRH's Adapted Sports Director or MedStar NRH volunteer coordinator. Complaints and allegations will be addressed under MedStar NRH Adapted Sports program's Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

### **REPORTING POLICY**

Every MNRH Adapted Sports staff member and/or volunteer must report:

- (1) violations of the Player contract,
- (2) misconduct as defined in MNRH's Athlete Protection Policy, and
- (3) suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse.

**As a matter of policy, MNRH 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***

Coaches, managers and/or volunteers at MNRH Adapted Sports program are required to report suspicions or allegations of child sexual abuse by a colleague or co-worker, to:

- (1) immediate supervisor,
- (2) MedStar NRH Adapted Sports Director,
- (3) MNRH Volunteer Coordinator
- (4) Center for SafeSport <https://www.safesport.org/report-a-concern>
- (5) where applicable, **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 team manager, MedStar NRH Adapted Sports Director or volunteer coordinator

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

Approximately 1/3 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 a team manager, MedStar NRH Adapted Sports Director or MedStar NRH Volunteer Coordinator 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) immediate supervisor,
- (2) a MNRH team manager
- (3) a member of MNRH's Participant Safety Committee.

MNRH also encourages member parents, athletes and other sport participants to communicate violations of MNRH's Participant Safety Handbook and/or allegations and suspicions of child physical and sexual abuse to a MNRH administrator or member of MNRH's Participant Safety Committee. Where applicable, parents may also report to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

## **REPORTING PROCEDURE**

### **To Whom to Report**

Staff members and volunteers may report to any team manager or MNRH administrator with whom they are comfortable sharing their concerns. You may also report to any member of its Participant Safety Committee, which includes the following four designated Incident Review Officials (IROs):

- Laura Long/Manager, Quality and Performance/202-877-1388
- Harsh Thakkar/ Peer Wellness Coordinator/ 202-877-1859
- Rita Penniman/Recreation Therapist/202-877-1647
- Allison Huck/Recreation Therapist/202-877-1933

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**

MNRH 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 MNRH for individuals to provide, at a minimum, (1) the name of the complainant(s); (2) the type of misconduct alleged and the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct.

### ***Reporting Form***

Individuals reporting child physical or sexual abuse or other misconduct may complete an Incident Report Form. (at end of this document) Information on this form includes:

- 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 approximate dates the misconduct was committed
- 5) the names of other individuals who might have information regarding the alleged misconduct
- 6) a summary statement of the reasons to believe that misconduct has occurred

MNRH will withhold the complainant's name on request, to the extent permitted by law. A copy of MNRH'S Reporting Form can be found on our website [www.nrhrehab.org](http://www.nrhrehab.org) and in Player Safety manual.

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

### **Confidentiality**

To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, MNRH 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**

MNRH 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 their name
- by expressing concerns verbally to a MNRH team manager or a member of MNRH's Participant Safety Committee
- through email, texts or notes left for a MNRH team manager or a member of MNRH's Participant Safety Committee.

**However, anonymous reporting may make it difficult for MNRH to investigate or properly address allegations.**

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

### **"Whistleblower" Protection**

Regardless of outcome, MNRH will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. MNRH 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**

### **Suspicious 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. MNRH, its coaches 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, MNRH 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).

**Reporting to Center for SafeSport:** <https://www.safesport.org/report-a-concern>

The Center handles ALL reports of sexual abuse within the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Movements. Make a report to the Center if you have a reasonable suspicion of sexual misconduct such as child sex abuse, non-consensual sexual conduct, sexual harassment or intimate relationships involving an imbalance of power.

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

When an allegation of child physical or sexual abuse is made against a staff member, youth and/or volunteer, MNRH 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, MNRH may suspend or change the assignment of a staff member and/or volunteer.

In those cases where the Ted Stevens Act may apply, the accused individual will be offered a hearing. A hearing under the Ted Stevens Act will not necessarily affect MNRH's ability to immediately suspend or terminate the accused individual from employment or performing services for organization.

A staff member or volunteer's failure to report to a supervisor, a MNRH team manager or member of the Participant Safety Committee is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of a staff member and/or dismissal of a volunteer.

### **Misconduct and Policy Violations**

MNRH addresses internally alleged policy violations and misconduct – bullying, harassment, hazing, emotional, physical and sexual – that are not reportable under relevant state or federal law. Staff members and/or volunteer must report policy violations and misconduct to an immediate supervisor, Team manager or member of MNRH's Participant Safety Committee.

MNRH may also investigate allegations of child physical or sexual abuse that are reportable, if such investigation does not interfere with any ongoing criminal investigation or prosecution for abuse. Such allegations may include:

- Emotional abuse
- Abuse reported outside the relevant statutes of limitation
- Allegations of abuse that were reported to authorities, but: (a) legal authorities did not press criminal charges; (b) criminal charges were filed, but not pursued to trial; or (c) the alleged offender was acquitted at trial

### **NOTIFICATION**

Following MNRH's notice of a credible allegation that results in the removal of an employee, coach or other volunteer, MNRH may consider the circumstances in which it will notify other parents of athletes with whom the accused individual may have had contact. In MNRH's discretion, as appropriate, and after consultation with counsel, MNRH may notify its staff members, contractors, volunteers, parents, and/or athletes of any allegation of child physical or sexual abuse or other criminal behavior that (1) law enforcement authorities are actively investigating; or (2) that MNRH is investigating internally. Advising others of an allegation may lead to additional reports of child physical or sexual abuse and other misconduct.

## MedStar NRH Adaptive Sports Program Reporting Form

DATE OF SUBMISSION: \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION I: *This section is about the individual you are reporting. Please provide as much information as possible.***

1. Name of Individual you are reporting (First & Last):

Comments:

2. Age or Approximate Age:

3. Gender: Male/Female

4. Address (City, State required):

5. Position(s) this individual holds or held (please circle all that apply):

Head Coach / Assistant Coach / Club Employee/ Volunteer / Official / Other / Not sure

6. Club where individual works and/or volunteers or worked/volunteered previously:

Comments:

**SECTION II: *This section asks questions about the incident or incidents you are reporting. Please provide as much specific information as you are able.***

7. Type of Offense (i.e. what happened?):

8. Where did the incident or incidents take place? (City, State and any other available location information):

Comments:

9. Please Describe what happened (including who, what, when, where)

Comments:

**SECTION III: *This section is for information about the victim or victims. If you are the victim and wish to remain anonymous, you may do so. In that case, please enter only your age, city, state, and club affiliation.***

10. Name:

11. Age (or approximate age):

12. Club affiliation (if any):

13. Contact phone number (Note, if this person is under 18, please provide contact information for his/her parent or guardian):

14. Contact e-mail address (if this individual is under 18, please provide contact information for parent or guardian):

15. Gender: Male / Female

**SECTION IV: Your Information**

***You may remain anonymous if you wish. However, providing your information is vastly helpful to a swift and effective investigation. A person reporting alleged misconduct should not fear any retribution and/or consequence when filing a report he or she believes to be true.***

16. Name:

17. Phone number:

18. E-mail address:

19. Club affiliation (if any):

20. Relationship to victim (Please circle any that apply):

Self

Parent/Guardian

Other family member

Friend or acquaintance

Club member, coach or volunteer

Other or prefer not to say

**SECTION V: *Other Information***

21. If you have any other information that you feel would be helpful to an investigation of the alleged offense you have reported, please enter it here:

Please submit to:

Medstar NRH  
Attn: Director of TR and Community Outreach  
102 Irving ST NW  
Washington DC 20010

or email to [joan.p.joyce@medstar.net](mailto:joan.p.joyce@medstar.net), or your immediate supervisor.