

OAR



OLYMPIA AREA ROWING

Internal Policies and Participant Safety Handbook

February 2018

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INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

With the help of the United States Olympic Committee and US Rowing, the Olympia Area Rowing Association (“OAR”) has adopted the following Safe Sport policies as they relate specifically to OAR run activities. Such activities include OAR sanctioned and owned events, any domestic training and competitions, and all activities associated with these events.

All forms of misconduct are intolerable and in direct conflict with the US Rowing ideals and those of OAR. OAR publishes this handbook as a resource to guide the development, implementation, and internal review of effective athlete safety and misconduct prevention strategies for rowing activities at OAR. The handbook specifically identifies and addresses six primary types of misconduct, including bullying, harassment, hazing, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, and sexual misconduct.

Definitions:

Staff: all employees of OAR and all individuals appointed by OAR to coach OAR programs

Volunteers: any individual appointed by OAR to a position of authority over, or frequent contact with, athletes

SECTION 1: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

OAR’s policies and procedures require staff members and volunteers to report abuse, misconduct and violations of this Participant Safety Handbook. Misconduct in sport includes:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional misconduct
- Physical misconduct, and
- Sexual misconduct, including child sexual abuse

Accordingly, before interacting with athletes, staff members and volunteers must successfully complete the online training module and corresponding tests at: <https://safesport.org/> The course is free, but the site requires registration. When creating an account, select “USA Rowing” from the drop down menu when prompted to select an organization, and use the USRowing account code: J5YZ-UJKV-YMFX-4ENI.

Certificates of completion must be presented to the OAR Vice President or his or her designee. This training is then required to be successfully repeated every two (2) years.

SECTION 2: BACKGROUND SCREENING

Staff and volunteers must consent to, and pass, a formal applicant screening process before performing services for OAR. Elements of our screening process include an application form, interviews, reference checks, and a criminal background check.

2.1 APPLICATION FORM

Each applicant will complete an application form that includes a signed release, consistent with federal, state and local laws regulating employment practices, that allows references to speak freely about the applicant's qualifications without fear of reprisal and authorizing OAR to obtain information concerning an applicant's past employment, volunteer experience, and information provided by the applicant during the screening process.

2.2 REFERENCE CHECKS

References of applicants will be contacted (either by phone or in writing) and asked specific questions regarding the applicant's professional experiences, demeanor, and appropriateness for involvement with minor athletes and participants.

2.3 CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK

Staff and volunteers will be asked to undergo a criminal background check before providing services for OAR. Through this criminal background check, OAR will utilize reasonable efforts to ascertain past criminal history of any potential staff or volunteer. Upon expressing an interest in applying, the applicants name will be provided to a third party criminal background check vendor. OAR will request that its background check vendor provide and conduct a criminal background check that at a minimum (1) performs a national search of state criminal repositories; (2) performs a search of state sexual offender registries; and (3) verify a person's identification against his or her social security number or another personal identifier.

Each applicant has the duty to disclose his or her criminal history. Failing to disclose or intentionally misrepresenting an arrest plea or conviction history in an application is grounds for employment, volunteer and/or membership revocation or restriction, regardless of when the offense is discovered. Any applicant who has been banned by another sport organization, as temporarily or permanently ineligible, must self-disclose this information. A failure to disclose is a basis for disqualification for potential applicants. Notice of findings will be provided to the

designated staff contact at OAR who administers applications. Individuals may challenge the findings by appealing to the criminal background check vendor.

Criminal background checks will be refreshed as required by law and/or at the discretion of the OAR Vice President for staff and volunteers who are 18 years of age or older and perform services for OAR.

2.4 RECORDS

Records of background screening are secured at a location decided by the OAR Vice President for a period indicated by applicable law or until the applicant is no longer affiliated with OAR, whichever date is later.

SECTION 3: ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICY

3.1 COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

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 or volunteer to immediately report his or her observations to an immediate supervisor or the OAR Vice President or, if the report concerns any of those individuals, to an OAR board member.

Staff members, volunteers, club athletes and participants shall refrain from all forms of misconduct, which include; bullying, harassment, hazing, emotional misconduct, physical misconduct, and sexual misconduct, including child sexual abuse.

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; or (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.

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.

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.

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: verbal acts, physical acts, acts that deny attention or support; or (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.

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.

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.

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

3.2 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), coach, and/or volunteer.

3.3 SUPERVISION OF MINOR ATHLETES AND PARTICIPANTS

During training and competition, OAR strives to create two-deep leadership and minimize one-to-one interactions to create a safe, training environment and to protect athletes, participants, coaches and volunteers.

3.3.1 Individual Meetings: An individual meeting may be necessary to address an athlete's concerns, training program, or competition schedule. Under these circumstances, staff members and volunteers are to observe the following guidelines:

- Any individual meeting should occur when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed
- Where possible, an individual meeting should take place in a publicly visible and open area, such as the corner of the boathouse or dock
- If an individual meeting is to take place in an office, the door should remain unlocked and open
- If a closed-door meeting is necessary, the staff member or volunteer must inform another staff member or volunteer and ensure the door remains unlocked

3.3.2 Individual Training Sessions: In the rare event of the need of an individual training session(s) with an athlete or participant, written permission of a minor athlete's parents or guardians is required in advance of the individual training session(s), and parents and guardians should be encouraged to attend such sessions.

3.4 PHYSICAL CONTACT BETWEEN AND WITH ATHLETES

Appropriate physical contact, athlete to athlete, or between athletes and coaches, staff members, contractors, or volunteers is a productive and inevitable part of sport. Athletes are more likely to acquire advanced physical skills and enjoy their sport participation through appropriate physical contact. However, guidelines for appropriate physical contact reduce the potential for misconduct or the misconstruing of an action.

Physical contact with athletes - for safety, consolation and celebration - has multiple criteria in common which make them both safe and appropriate. These include: the physical contact takes place in public, there is no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact, and the physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult.

3.4.1 Prohibited Physical Contact: Prohibited forms of physical contact, which shall be reported immediately under our Reporting Policy include, without limitation:

- Asking or having an athlete sit in the lap of a coach, administrator, staff member or volunteer
- Lingering or repeated embraces of athletes that go beyond criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact
- Slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from an athlete
- “Cuddling” or maintaining prolonged physical contact during any aspect of training, travel or overnight stay
- Playful, yet inappropriate contact that is not a part of regular training, (e.g., tickling or “horseplay” wrestling)
- Continued physical contact that makes an athlete obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed or not
- Any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire for decreased or no physical contact, where such decreased contact is feasible in a competitive training environment.

3.5 ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

As part of OAR's emphasis on athlete safety, all electronic communications (text, email, posts, instant messages, or similar media) between a coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes.

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.

3.5.1 Facebook, Blogs and Similar Sites: Staff and volunteers may not have OAR junior athletes join a personal social media page or vice versa. Athlete members and parents can friend the official OAR Team page and staff and volunteers can communicate to athlete members through the site.

3.5.2 Twitter, Instant Messaging and Similar Media: Staff/volunteers and athletes may "follow" each other.

3.5.3 Misconduct: Social media and electronic communications can also be used to commit misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communications by staff, volunteers, administrators, officials, parents or athletes will not be tolerated and are considered violations of our Participant Safety Handbook.

3.6 LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

We practice at the OAR Boathouse, located at the Swantown Marina, on Marine Drive NE in the Port of Olympia. The OAR Boathouse has no locker room or changing facilities. Athletes will be expected to come dressed for practice and to change and shower at home. Restrooms and possible changing areas are located nearby and are provided by the Port of Olympia for public use. As such, there are likely to be people who are not associated with OAR in the changing area around the time of practice.

When we travel for competition, the facilities may differ from location to location. We will work with the host team to provide as much information about the locker room and changing areas as early as possible and post such information as soon as it is available.

3.7 TRAVEL

3.7.1 Travel Events: With the exception of Team Travel Events (see 3.7.2), OAR does not sponsor, coordinate, or arrange for travel. Athletes or their parents/guardians (for junior athletes) are responsible for making all travel arrangements. In these instances, it is the responsibility of the athlete or their parents/guardians (for junior 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. Junior athletes are not permitted to drive themselves to regattas.

In an effort to minimize one-on-one interactions, OAR staff members and/or volunteers, who are not also acting as a parent, should not drive alone with an unrelated 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 is involved in the athlete's 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.

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.

3.7.2 Team Travel Events: Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when OAR coordinates or arranges for travel, does not require the parents/guardians of junior athletes to attend, and coordinates for adult chaperones in an effort to provide adequate supervision, with a maximum ratio of nine junior athletes to one chaperone.

Lodging: For team travel, the team will lodge in hotels or in facilities such as gymnasiums. For hotel travel, OAR athletes will share rooms with 2 - 4 athletes to a room. Athletes will

only share a room with other athletes of the same gender. OAR will notify hotel management should any special requirements be warranted. For example, we will ask hotel management to remove minibars and pay per view channels. Regardless of gender, a coach will not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an athlete (unless the coach is the parent, guardian, sibling or spouse of that particular athlete).

Chaperone responsibilities for and during team travel events: Adult chaperones will accompany team travel to ensure that the athletes, coaches and volunteers adhere to OAR's policy guidelines. While these include the travel policy, it also includes all other relevant policies contained in OAR's Internal Policies and Participant Safety Handbook. Specifically, chaperones will:

1. Familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries
2. Conform, and monitor for others' adherence to, club policies during team travel
3. Help athletes be on time for team commitments (as possible)
4. Assist staff and volunteers with team travel logistical needs (as possible)
5. Monitor athletes for adherence to curfew restrictions
6. Ensure athletes comply with hotel room restrictions based on gender or age bracket requirements
7. Not use drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing their chaperone duties
8. Make certain that athletes are not alone in a hotel room with any adult apart from a family member; this includes staff and volunteers (including other chaperones)
9. Immediately report any concerns about sexual and physical abuse, misconduct or policy violations

Chaperone requirements: A Chaperone is required to be an adult and to:

1. Undergo and pass a criminal background check
2. Successfully complete Safe Sport training
3. Familiarize themselves with OAR's Internal Policies and Participant Safety Handbook
4. If operating a private car for team travel, provide a copy of the chaperone's valid driver's license, vehicle registration and proof of insurance

Staff responsibilities for and during travel events:

1. Prepare athletes for team travel and make athletes aware of all expectations
2. Familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries
3. Conform, and monitor for others' adherence, to club policies during team travel
4. Notify parents before taking any disciplinary action against an athlete if the athlete is traveling without his or her parents

SECTION 4: REPORTING POLICY, PROCEDURES AND HANDLING

4.1 REPORTING POLICY

Every OAR staff member and/or volunteer must report violations of the Participant Safety Handbook, misconduct as defined in OAR's Athlete Protection Policy, and suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse.

OAR also encourages member parents, athletes and other sport participants to communicate violations of this Participant Safety Handbook and/or allegations and suspicions of child physical and sexual abuse to OAR staff, volunteers, or an OAR board member. Where applicable, parents may also report to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

4.1.1 Reporting Child Physical or Sexual Abuse: As a matter of policy, OAR 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. Staff members and/or volunteers at OAR are required to report suspicions or allegations of child sexual abuse by a colleague or co-worker, to their immediate supervisor, an OAR board member, and where applicable, appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Washington State Mandatory reporting law information can be found at:

https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/state/index.cfm?event=stateStatutes.processSearch

State of Washington Reporting Information:

- TTY: (800) 624-6186 and Toll-Free: (800) 562-5624 or (866) END-HARM (866-363-4276)

4.2 REPORTING PROCEDURE

Staff members, and volunteers may report to any supervisor or OAR board member. Parents, guardians and others may report to any coach, supervisor, or OAR board member with whom they are comfortable sharing their concerns.

OAR will take a report in the way that is most comfortable for the person initiating the report, including an anonymous, in-person, verbal or written report. Regardless of how you choose to report, it is helpful to OAR for individuals to provide, at a minimum, (1) the name of the complainant(s); (2) the type of misconduct alleged and 3) the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct. Although anonymity is accepted, OAR encourages complainant(s) to provide their name(s) as anonymous reporting may make it difficult for OAR to properly address allegations.

Individuals reporting misconduct may complete an Incident Report Form. OAR will withhold the complainant's name on request, to the extent permitted by law. A copy of this form can be found on our website at www.olympiaarearowing.org as well as at the end of this handbook.

4.2.1 “Whistleblower” Protection: Regardless of outcome, OAR will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. OAR 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.

4.2.2 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.

4.3 HOW REPORTS ARE HANDLED

OAR recognizes that there are varying levels of misconduct. For example, physical and sexual misconduct are serious violations that may result in immediate dismissal. In contrast, a youth participant who tells a single sexually risqué joke constitutes less serious misconduct and depending on the circumstances, might be dealt with more appropriately through dialogue and a verbal warning. In all cases, OAR's disciplinary procedures and actions will be proportionate, reasonable and applied fairly and equally.

On receipt of an allegation of misconduct, as defined in the Athlete Protection Policy, that does not involve child physical or sexual abuse, the Vice President will determine the appropriate steps to address the conduct based on several factors, including (i) the age of the complainant or victim, (ii) the age of the accused and (iii) the nature, scope, and extent of the allegations.

On receipt of a credible and specific allegation of child abuse or other serious misconduct, OAR may immediately suspend or terminate the accused individual to ensure participant safety.

4.4 INVESTIGATIONS

4.4.1 Investigation of Child Physical or Sexual Abuse: OAR, its staff members 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, OAR 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. Upon the conclusion of the official investigation, the OAR board will review the results and determine disciplinary actions if required.

4.4.2 Investigations of Other Prohibited Misconduct: As appropriate, and at its discretion, OAR's Vice President may institute a formal investigation to address serious allegations of misconduct. However, OAR anticipates that an investigation and hearing will be undertaken to address only the most serious allegations and patterns of behavior that warrant significant sanctions. Accordingly, OAR anticipates that this disciplinary procedure will be used rarely.

The Vice President shall designate an individual or individuals to investigate any allegation of misconduct not involving abuse or neglect of a minor. In all cases, the individual(s) performing the investigation shall be impartial and have no involvement in the alleged misconduct. A report of the investigation shall be made to the Vice President. Thereafter, the Disciplinary Action Procedure set forth below will be applicable.

4.5 DISCIPLINARY ACTION PROCEDURE

The Vice President may at his or her option, (a) determine whether prohibited misconduct has occurred and, if so, impose a disciplinary sanction, or (b) refer the matter to the OAR Board for action by that body. Sanctions imposed by the Vice President may be appealed to the Board, whose decisions in all cases shall be final. Regardless of whether a sanction is appealed, the Vice President shall report to the Board all cases in which an individual has been accused of child physical or sexual abuse, and all cases in which he or she determines that an individual has violated any other provision of this policy.

SECTION 5: MONITORING POLICY AND PROCEDURE COMPLIANCE

By monitoring the interactions among staff, volunteers, athletes, and other, OAR works to prevent, recognize and respond to inappropriate and harmful behaviors as set forth in our Participant Safety Handbook, while reinforcing appropriate behaviors. OAR utilizes multiple monitoring methods to observe how individuals are interacting, including without limitation (1) formal supervision, (2) informal supervision, and (3) maintaining frequent contact with staff members, volunteer and athletes who interact off-site. While OAR has a formal reporting policy, staff members and volunteers should be prepared to respond immediately to inappropriate or harmful behavior, potential risk situations and potential boundary violations. Staff members and volunteers will redirect inappropriate behaviors to promote positive behaviors, confront inappropriate or harmful behaviors, and report behaviors if necessary.

INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Incident:	
Reported By:	
Date:	
Individuals (s) Involved:	

Location of Incident:	
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Summary of Incident:	
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INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Statements Provided By:	
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Investigated By:	
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Conclusion:	
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Recommendation:	
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ACTION TAKEN:
