



West Schuylkill Football Club, LLC Athlete and Participant Safety Policy

ARTICLE I - PURPOSE

The purpose of the West Schuylkill Football Club, LLC (WSFC) Athlete and Participant Safety Policy is to communicate methods of minimizing risk to Board members, coaches, team managers, players and families. This policy should not be used in lieu of legal advice given to WSFC.

ARTICLE II – APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT

Physical contact with minor athletes has multiple criteria that make it both safe and appropriate.

- The physical contact takes place in public
- There is no potential for (or actual) physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact
- The physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult.

The safety of minor athletes is paramount, and in many instances the athletic activity is made safer through appropriate physical contact.

- Spotting an athlete so that he or she will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment
- Positioning an athlete’s body so that he or she more quickly acquires an athletic skill, gets a better sense of where his or her body is in space, or improves balance and coordination
- Making athletes aware that he or she may be in harm’s way due to other practicing athletes, or equipment use
- Releasing muscle cramps
- Carrying an injured athlete off the field

Sports are physical by definition. WSFC recognizes that participants often express a joy of participation, competition, achievement and victory through physical acts, and WSFC encourages these public expressions of celebration.

- Greeting gestures such as high-fives, fist bumps, and brief hugs
- Congratulatory gestures such as celebratory hugs, “jump-arounds” and pats on the back for any form of athletic or personal accomplishment.

It may be appropriate to console an emotionally distressed athlete (e.g., an athlete who has been injured or has just lost a competition).

- Embracing a crying athlete in a public place or circumstance
- Putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down
- Lifting a fallen athlete off the playing surface and “dusting them off” to encourage them to continue competition.



ARTICLE III – PROHIBITED PHYSICAL CONTACT

The physical contact mentioned below is prohibited between adult and minor athlete AND between minor athletes. The prohibited forms of physical contact will be immediately reported to WSFC. Some forms of physical contact may constitute physical or sexual abuse that must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities and SafeSport.

- Asking or having a minor athlete sit in the lap of a coach
- Lingering or repeated embrace of a minor athlete that goes beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact
- Slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from a minor athlete
- Cuddling or maintaining prolonged physical contact of a minor athlete during any aspect of training, travel or overnight stay
- Playful, yet inappropriate contact that is not a part of regular training such as pats on the rear end, tickling, or wrestling-type horseplay
- Continued physical contact that makes a minor athlete obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed or not
- Any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire by the minor athlete for decreased or no physical contact, where such decreased contact is feasible in a competitive training environment.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at WSFC and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to the victim. WSFC is committed to providing a safe, caring, and friendly environment for all participants. If bullying does occur, incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Any minor athlete who is aware of bullying behavior is expected to tell his/her coach. Any parent with concerns of bullying behavior should contact his/her coach.

Harassment is the repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance, are intended to offend or degrade, or are intended to create a hostile environment. These behaviors 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 or mental or physical disability

Hazing is defined as coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for an athlete joining a group or an athlete being socially accepted by a group's members



ARTICLE IV – PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES AND ACTIVITIES

Board Members, coaches, and team managers are prohibited from being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while participating in any WSFC associated games or training session. Board Members, coaches, and team managers are prohibited from providing alcohol or illegal drugs to minor athletes or any other program participant.

WSFC programs and activities are tobacco-free. WSFC requires Board Members, coaches, and team managers to refrain from the use or possession of tobacco products at any WSFC associated game or training session. Board Members, coaches, and team managers are prohibited from providing tobacco products to minor athletes.

Board Members, coaches, and team managers should never be nude in the presence of minor athletes.

Board Members, coaches, and team managers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with minor athletes. Board Members, coaches, and team managers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any minor athlete in the program. This provision includes the use of cellular phones, text messages, e-mail, instant messaging, Facebook, and online chat rooms or other social media.

Board Members, coaches, and team managers are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, videos, etc.) while in the presence of minor athletes.

Board Members, coaches, and team managers are not permitted to share rooms with athletes, unless that Board Member, coach, or team manager is the parent/guardian of that athlete. Board Members, coaches, and team managers should not be meeting with the athletes in personal/private spaces such as hotel rooms and should always use designated conference rooms/meeting area in hotels.



ARTICLE V – ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

All electronic communications between a Board member, coach, or team manager and minor athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about program activities. As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the athlete’s family. Any email, text message, social media post, or similar communication should include the athlete’s parents/guardians.

Board Members, coaches, and team managers can communicate with minor athletes through social media, but all communication needs to be in group form and public (no private communication). Board Members, coaches, and team managers may not have athletes join a personal social media page. All posts and messages shared among athletes or between Board member, coach, or team manager and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes. Board Members, coaches, and team managers are not permitted to post inappropriate off-color content or comment on inappropriate off-color posts. If there is doubt, treat the content as inappropriate.

ARTICLE VI – ENFORCEMENT OF POLICY

Coaches are charged with the diligent enforcement of all rules contained in this Athlete and Participant Safety Policy. A violation of this policy can be grounds for immediate dismissal from WSFC. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the WSFC Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VII – ENFORCEMENT OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment at WSFC, Board members, coaches, team managers, players, and families must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of this policy. Reports of any abuse or violation of this policy may be made in writing to the WSFC Board of Directors. All questions or concerns related to abuse should be directed to the WSFC Board of Directors.

All allegations and accusations of any act considered to be harmful to a child will be reported to SafeSport for a full investigation. Upon formal reports to SafeSport and/or local law enforcement, the WSFC Board of Directors will provide a preliminary disciplinary action, given what information is available at that time, while investigations are underway.

WSFC will remain in constant contact with both SafeSport and law enforcement during all open investigations and will follow the guidelines and recommendations provided by SafeSport and law enforcement.