



West University Softball Association

CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The safety and well-being of all West University Softball Association (WUSA) players is paramount. WUSA provides a softball environment where young girls grow up happy, healthy, and, above all, safe. WUSA strives to create an environment that is as safe as possible both on and off the field. WUSA does not tolerate any type of abuse against a minor, including, but not limited to, sexual, physical, mental, and emotional (as well as any type of bullying, hazing, or harassment). WUSA's goal is to prevent child abuse from occurring through required background screenings, mandatory training and education, awareness, and mandated reporting of abuse by our volunteers.

WUSA maintains a zero-tolerance culture that does not allow any type of activity that promotes or allows any form of misconduct or abuse (mental, physical, emotional, or sexual) between players, coaches, parents/guardians/caretakers, spectators, volunteers, and/or any other individual. League officials will remove an individual that is exhibiting any type of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct and must report the individual to the authorities immediately.

APPLICABILITY

WUSA's Child Protection Program applies to anyone who participates in WUSA-approved programs and activities, including, but not limited to, Board of Directors members, volunteers, managers, coaches, umpires, spectators, players, or anyone who provides regular services to the league and/or has repetitive access to or contact with players or teams. Anyone with questions on who WUSA's Child Protection Program applies to should contact the WUSA helpline (WUSAhelp@wusa.org).

ENFORCEMENT

WUSA supports a culture that prohibits any type of activity that promotes or allows any form of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct behavior between players, coaches, parents, volunteers, and any other individual. League officials will remove any

individual that is exhibiting any type of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct and must report the individual to the authorities immediately.

DEFINITIONS

Defining child abuse is the first step in battling it. Child abuse can take several different forms, and it is important to understand what is considered child abuse and other terms that are mentioned herein.

Abuse or Neglect: The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C.A §5106g), as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, defines child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum, “any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation;” or “an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.”

Different types of Child Abuse or Neglect:

- Neglect is the negligent failure of a minor’s caretaker to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision which threatens harm to a minor’s health, safety, or welfare.
- Physical Abuse is any non-accidental, intentional, deliberate act that results in physical injury.
- Emotional and Psychological Abuse is any act that diminishes the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth by humiliation, intimidation, verbal assault, and emotional deprivation.
- Sexual Abuse is any type of maltreatment, violation, or exploitation that refers to the involvement of the child in sexual activity to provide sexual gratification or financial benefit to the perpetrator.
- Bullying is the intentional, repetitive harmful act, words, and behavior that makes the victim feel hurt, scared, and/or ashamed. Bullying can also be an imbalance of real or perceived power between the bully and the victim. Different types of bullying include, but are not limited to, physical bullying, verbal bullying, emotional bullying, harassment, and hazing.
- Grooming is the process where an individual creates a relationship with a minor or the minor's family to gain trust so he or she can take advantage of a minor for a sexual purpose.

Child/Minor: Any individual who is younger than 18 years of age or who is not an emancipated minor.

Programs and Activities: Any games, practices, tournaments, approved activities, and/or approved special games are considered WUSA programs and activities.

Volunteer: Any person in the organization who provides regular service to the league and has contact with minors: coaches, managers, the Board of Directors, program workers, concession volunteers or workers, bus and carpool drivers, maintenance workers, or anyone that has repetitive access to or contact with players or teams.

WUSA's CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. WUSA COMPLETES BACKGROUND CHECKS ON ALL VOLUNTEERS

WUSA will complete background checks using the Protect Youth Sports (PYS) system on every volunteer application at no charge to the volunteer. WUSA uses this process to screen out persons with histories of crimes or other activities revealed by background checks that indicate that they may put children at risk and/or are not suitable for interaction with youth sports programs.

Anyone who fails to complete and submit the required check will not be allowed to participate as a manager or coach or volunteer with the team. WUSA will not approve volunteers with felony criminal convictions or convictions of crimes of moral turpitude.

2. WUSA REQUIRES THE REVIEW OF MANDATORY TRAINING & CONTINUING EDUCATION MATERIALS BY ALL VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers must review WUSA's Abuse Awareness materials and indicate their understanding annually when submitting for the PYS background check.

Abuse Awareness Resources

- [SafeSport](#)
- [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#)
- [American SPCC](#)

Understanding Grooming Resources

- [What Parents Need to Know: Grooming in Sport](#)

Because sexual abusers 'groom' the children for abuse, it is possible a staff member or volunteer may witness behavior intended to 'groom' a child for sexual abuse. Staff members and volunteers are asked to report 'grooming' behavior, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to a supervisor or a specific member of the organization.

Safe to Compete:

- [The Discussion Guide \(Ages 5-10\)](#)
- [The Discussion Guide \(Ages 11-17\)](#)
- [Tips for Protecting Child Athletes from Sexual Abuse](#)

3. WUSA MANDATES REPORTING

All WUSA volunteers understand they must Report Child Abuse, including sexual abuse involving a minor, to the proper authorities within 24 hours.

When an allegation of abuse is made against a WUSA volunteer, the league must protect the child from any further potential abuse by keeping the alleged abuser away from all children in the program until the incident is reported to one or more of the below outlets and completely investigated. The Safe Sport Act extends mandatory reporting to all volunteers in the league. An individual who is required, but fails to report suspected child abuse, is subject to criminal and civil penalties.

- Investigating Suspected Abuse

Once a report of abuse has been made, WUSA will promptly notify the alleged abuser that he/she is suspended from any involvement with the league until the investigation is completed. If the investigation substantiates the allegations, WUSA will assure that the individual will not have any further contact with the children in WUSA. All information and statements received from the parties involved with the incident (suspect, victim, witness, etc.) must be passed onto the proper authorities. WUSA officials will not attempt to investigate suspected abuse. Law enforcement and child services professionals will conduct the investigation.

- Reporting of Suspected Abuse

Federal law establishes a nationwide standard of duty to report suspected child abuse. Any volunteer who participates in WUSA must report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours to the proper authorities. If a case of abuse is suspected within WUSA, it must be reported to the appropriate child services organizations and/or local law enforcement, as well as to the WUSA President (email: president@WUSA.org). After making a report to law enforcement, WUSA may also consider contacting one of the following organizations for additional support:

- U.S. Center for SafeSport
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's
- The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline.

- Suspension/Termination of the Volunteer

If allegations of abuse are made against an individual in the league, WUSA will take steps to assure that the individual will not have any further contact with the children in the local league. While allegations of abuse are under investigation or if criminal

charges are pending, the WUSA will promptly notify the individual that he/she is suspended until the matter is resolved by an external investigation or through the court system. While an individual is suspended, he/she may not volunteer in any local league activity. If the allegations of abuse against an individual are substantiated, WUSA will notify the individual that he/she is terminated from their position and may no longer volunteer for WUSA in any capacity.

- Communication from WUSA to the League
WUSA will contact parents if a substantiated abuse allegation is made against a volunteer or participant within their league. WUSA understands that both parties (suspect and victim) have privacy rights. WUSA will only provide information available in a public record, without any commentary. Public records are documents that are received from a governmental body/agency and are available to the general public (such as police or sheriff's records, court records, a statement from the arresting police department).

4. WUSA MAINTAINS A NON-RETALIATION POLICY FOR REPORTING

WUSA prohibits retaliation against "good faith" reports of child abuse, even if the allegation is later determined to be unsubstantiated. Reporters of abuse cannot be afraid to come forward in cases where he/she either has firsthand knowledge of or a good faith belief that abuse has occurred, even if there is a possibility that the report is wrong. WUSA encourages all individuals in the league to be vigilant and observant in regard to the safety and protection of the children in the league.

5. WUSA PROHIBITS ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

WUSA maintains a policy that limits one-on-one contact with minors without being in an observable and interruptible distance from another adult. Most child sexual abuse or grooming is perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. By reducing such interactions between players and adult volunteers, WUSA reduces the risk of child sexual abuse. To minimize the chance of an individual's opportunity to groom or abuse a player, WUSA adopts a one-one-one policy relating to the interactions between a player and any adult volunteer of WUSA during the league's programs and activities.

WUSA informs all volunteers of our policy prior to the start of the season and provides a copy to all league volunteers of the following restrictions.

- Volunteers are prohibited from being alone with a minor athlete during the league's programs and events unless:
 - o There is an emergency.

- There is written permission from the player's parent/legal guardian.
 - The volunteer is the player's parent/legal guardian, sibling, or personal care assistant.
- A Volunteer's interactions with players must be observable and interruptible by another adult.
- Volunteers are prohibited from contacting players directly through social media or electronic communication unless another adult volunteer or the player's parent/legal guardian is copied.
- Volunteers are discouraged from interacting one-on-one with unrelated minor athletes in settings outside of local league program and activities (such as the volunteer's home, a restaurant, a vehicle, personal communication including electronic communication).
- Players may not reside with unrelated volunteers for the purpose of participation qualification within the league.
- If a volunteer is in a position where he/she is left alone with a player, he/she should not leave the child so long as the volunteer has exhausted all the options above to comply with the guidelines of the policy. Likewise, if a child is injured and must be transported to a hospital, urgent care, or treatment center, the volunteer should not leave the child alone if all options have been exhausted to comply with the policy in an emergency where medical treatment is necessary.
- Physical contact between volunteers and players should be very limited. Some examples of appropriate physical touch include high fives or administering appropriate first aid.

SUMMARY

The safety and well-being of all participants in WUSA is paramount. WUSA's Child Protection Program provides the necessary tools for WUSA participants to create an environment that is as safe as possible for its players. WUSA places the safety and well-being of its players above all else and is the very first value in our league mission. WUSA Parents/Guardians play a critical role in assuring the safety of their players. By reviewing this program and associated materials, WUSA's volunteers are equipped with awareness and can share WUSA's Child Protection Program with everyone in the league.