



# Treasure Coast Rowing Club

## SafeSport Strategy

### Athlete Protection Policy

#### Addressing:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional, Physical, or Sexual Misconduct

## Sign Offs

I acknowledge that I have been provided access to the safesport policy and documents.

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**I.** Athletes on the Juniors team cannot consent to sexual activity with any member of the coaching, administrative, or volunteer staff at the Treasure Coast Rowing Club, and all sexual interaction between such individuals and a Junior (**even if over the age of 18**) is strictly prohibited.

I acknowledge understanding the above provision

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**II.** The Treasure Coast Rowing Club 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.

I acknowledge understanding the above provision

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**III.** 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).

I acknowledge understanding the above provision

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**IV.** Coaches are encouraged to use discretion regarding social media friending individual junior members. If a coach has posts that are likely to cause discussions about appropriateness if it were distributed to all juniors team members and their parents, then it is best that the coach refrain from friending junior team members.

I acknowledge understanding the above provision

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## **Strategies to Recognize, Reduce and Respond to Misconduct in Sport**

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## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Child, children, minor and youth**

Anyone under the age of 18. Here, “child,” “children,” “minor” and “youth” are used interchangeably.

### **Child physical abuse**

Non-accidental trauma or physical injury caused by contact behaviors, such as punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child. Child physical abuse may also include non-contact physical misconduct when foreseeable harm is intentionally inflicted.

### **Child sexual misconduct and/or abuse**

Child sexual abuse involves any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact with a minor that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force regardless of whether there is deception or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity. Sexual contact between minors may be considered abusive if there is a significant imbalance of power, disparity in age or development or when one child is the aggressor. The sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive written or electronic communications, exposure, voyeurism, or recording of a sexual nature.

### **Staff Member,**

Staff member refers to any coach, assistant coach, administrative support, or volunteer that has a recurring role with operation of the TCRC juniors program.

## ***Strategy 1: Training and Education***

Our policies and procedures require staff members and/or volunteers to report abuse, misconduct and violations of its Participant Safety Handbook. To do so, staff members and/or volunteers (volunteer coaches, parent chaperones, referees, other volunteers) should have a basic understanding of sexual abusers, as well as “grooming,” the most common strategy offenders use to seduce their victims. Using a combination of attention, affection and gifts, offenders select a child, win the child’s trust (and the trust of the child’s parent or guardian), manipulate the child into sexual activity, and keep the child from disclosing abuse.

Abuse is not limited to direct first-person contact, but also encompasses electronic and social media.

Ongoing training will be provided to coaches and regularly active volunteers. SafeSport committee members, and people reasonably expected to have significant interactions with underage athletes. Training may be conducted in person, at USRowing conventions as part of coaching certification, from online resources such as SafeSport housed at <http://training.teamusa.org/brands/details?brandId=6>, or other resources as appropriate.

# ***Strategy 2:***

## ***Screening Staff Members and Volunteers***

### **APPLICANT SCREENING**

Staff members, contractors and/or volunteers with significant contact with minors must consent to, and pass, a formal applicant screening process before performing services for The Treasure Coast Rowing Club.

### **EDUCATION ABOUT CLUB'S PROTECTION POLICIES**

To deter applicants who may be at risk of abusing athletes from applying for positions, the Treasure Coast Rowing Club educates its applicants about its protection policies and offers applicants an early opt-out by:

- Informing applicants about our policies and procedures relevant to prevention
- Asking applicants to review and agree to our policies and procedures before proceeding with the process
- Requiring applicants to consent to a criminal background check and provide professional references that can vouch for their ability and character

### **REFERENCES**

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.

### **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK POLICY**

All applicants will be asked to undergo a criminal background check that complies with the Fair Credit Reporting Act **before** providing services for the Treasure Coast Rowing Club. Through this criminal background check, the Treasure Coast Rowing Club will utilize reasonable efforts to ascertain past criminal history of an applicant.

### **PROCESS**

The Criminal Background Check Consent and Waiver Release form must be submitted and the applicant cleared before he or she may perform services for The Treasure Coast Rowing Club.

On receipt of the Criminal Background Check Consent and Waiver Release form, the Treasure Coast Rowing Club will request that its vendor perform the criminal background check. As part of its criminal background check, at a minimum and without limitation the Treasure Coast Rowing Club will have the following areas examined:

- (1) perform a national search of state criminal repositories;
- (2) perform a search of state sexual offender registries; and
- (3) verify a person's identification against his or her social security number or other personal identifier.

Current initial screens are done with ServPro – Level 2 background screening or with a similarly qualified vendor.

### **Criminal History**

The Treasure Coast Rowing Club will use a criminal background check to gather information about an applicant's prior criminal history. The information revealed by the criminal background check may disqualify an applicant from serving as a staff member, contractor and/or volunteer.

### **Full Disclosure**

Each applicant has the affirmative duty to disclose his or her criminal history. Failing to disclose or intentionally misrepresenting an arrest plea or conviction history in an application or any other information provided by an applicant during the screening process is grounds for employment, volunteer and/or membership revocation or restriction, regardless of when the offense is discovered.

- If an applicant (1) is arrested, (2) pleas or (3) is convicted of a crime other than a traffic offense during the screening process, the applicant is required to disclose such information immediately.
- In the event a person is serving as a staff member, contractor or volunteer and (1) is arrested, (2) pleas or (3) is convicted after the completion of the screening process, he or she has an affirmative duty to disclose such information immediately to his or her supervisor or the Treasure Coast Rowing Club Board of Directors.
- **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.**

### **AFFIRMATIVE DUTY TO DISCLOSE**

If, during the course of employment or participation with the club, a staff member or volunteer is accused, arrested, indicted or convicted of a criminal offense against a child, it is the duty and responsibility of the staff member or volunteer to notify an immediate supervisor or a Treasure Coast Rowing Club administrator.

# ***Strategy 3:***

## ***Establishing Boundaries***

### **Overview**

In the event any staff member or volunteer observes inappropriate behaviors, suspected emotional, 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 [TCRCsafesport@gmail.com](mailto:TCRCsafesport@gmail.com), to their immediate supervisor, or an officer of the Treasure Coast Rowing Club Board of Directors.

**Staff members, TCRC club 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 member to immediately report suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse to [TCRCsafesport@gmail.com](mailto:TCRCsafesport@gmail.com), their immediate supervisor, or an officer of the Treasure Coast Rowing Club Board of Directors. Mandatory reporting is not limited to incidents related to the rowing club, but extends to include incidents that covered individuals learn about what happened at school or home, regardless of the suspected perpetrator, including parents.

This Policy applies to

- Staff and volunteers (parent chaperones)
- TCRC members
- The Treasure Coast Rowing Club Junior athletes and parents

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.

### **Bullying**

- (1) An intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing or willfully initiating or threatening 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),
- (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.
- (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:

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

Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of an athlete's willingness to cooperate or participate.

## **Emotional Misconduct**

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

### ***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(s) 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.
- (4) **Malignant Social/Electronic Posts.** Disseminating or threatening to disseminate information, rumors, or pictures that are likely to disparage, shame or inflict emotional injury on another individual.

***Note: Bullying, harassment, and hazing 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, punching may be appropriate in combat sports, but has no place in rowing.

### ***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;

**(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.
- (d) prescribing dieting or other weight-control methods (e.g., weigh-ins, caliper tests) without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of athletes.

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

## **Sexual Misconduct**

**The age of consent in Florida is 18 (16 if the other party is under the age of 23). All reports of consensual and non-consensual sexual interactions between an adult over 23 years old and a junior under the age of 18 (under 16 if the adult is 18-23 years old) will be reported to law enforcement. Sexual interactions between TCRC coaching staff, TCRC master's program, adult volunteers or junior's parents that are not illegal by Florida statute are still against TCRC rules and will result in separation of the adult from the Treasure Coast Rowing Club.**

- (1) Any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is (a) non-consensual or forced, (b) coerced or manipulated, or (c) perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. This may include interactions between two youths.
- (2) Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an adult associated with the TCRC coaching staff, TCRC master's program, adult volunteer or juniors parent.

**Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with any member of the coaching, administrative, or volunteer staff at the Treasure Coast Rowing Club, and all sexual interaction between such individuals 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.

**(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.

## **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 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.

# ***Strategy 4:***

## ***Managing Training and Competition***

### **SUPERVISION OF ATHLETES AND PARTICIPANTS**

During training and competition, the Treasure Coast Rowing Club strives to create two-deep leadership and minimize one-to-one interactions to create a safe training environment and to protect athletes and participants.

### **APPROPRIATE ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS**

#### **Individual Meetings**

An individual meeting may be necessary to address an athlete's concerns, training program, or competition schedule. Under these circumstances, coaches, staff members and/or 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 at the boathouse immediately prior to or after practice.
- If a closed-door meeting is necessary, the coach, staff member and/or volunteer must inform another coach, staff member, volunteer, and/or parent and ensure the door remains unlocked

#### **Individual Training Sessions**

An individual training session(s) with an athlete or participant may also be desired or necessary. These should be scheduled at a time when other people are likely to be at the boathouse. The Treasure Coast Rowing Club encourages parents and guardians to attend the training session.

### **PROHIBITED ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS**

Except as set forth above, minor athletes and participants will not be left unattended or unsupervised during Treasure Coast Rowing Club activities and coaches, staff members and/or volunteers are advised against being alone with an individual athlete and prohibited from being alone with athletes in the bathroom or shower area.

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ATHLETES**

### **What**

Policy describes the purpose and limits of appropriate physical contact between athletes and other relevant participants and identifies the person and/or entity to whom unacceptable forms of physical contact should be reported.

### **Why**

In almost all sports, coaching an athlete requires some amount and type of physical contact. Such contact may be with parts of the body that, in a non-sport context, may be inappropriate (e.g., positioning an athlete's leg or torso, or spotting an athlete to ensure they will not be injured by a fall). Physical contact is also natural and appropriate when celebrating victories and achievement or consoling athletes after a loss or injury.

## **PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH ATHLETES**

Treasure Coast Rowing Club adheres to the following principles and guidelines in regard to physical contact with our athletes:

### **Common Criteria for Appropriate Physical Contact**

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
- the physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult

### **Safety**

The safety of our athletes is paramount and in many instances we make the athletic space safer through appropriate physical contact. Examples include:

- spotting an athlete so that they will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment
- positioning an athlete's body so that they more quickly acquire an athletic skill, get a better sense of where their body is in space, or improve their balance and coordination
- making athletes aware that they might be in harm's way because of other athletes practicing

- around them or because of equipment in use
- releasing muscle cramps

### **Celebration**

Sports are physical by definition and we recognize participants often express their joy of participation, competition, achievement and victory through physical acts. We encourage these public expressions of celebration, which include:

- 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

### **Consolation**

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

- embracing a crying athlete
- putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down (“side hugs”)

### **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 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 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.



## **VIOLATIONS**

Violations of this policy must be reported to a supervisor, [TCRCsafesport@gmail.com](mailto:TCRCsafesport@gmail.com), or an officer of the Treasure Coast Rowing Club Board of Directors. Violations will be addressed under our Disciplinary Rules and Procedure. Some forms of physical contact may constitute child physical or sexual abuse that **must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities.**

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

Effective communication concerning travel, training schedules and administrative issues among administrators, staff, coaches, athletes and their families is critical. However, the use of mobile devices, web-based applications, social media and other forms of electronic communications increases the possibility for improprieties and misunderstandings, and provides would-be offenders with unsupervised access to an athlete. The improper use of mobile and electronic communications can result in misconduct and adherence to a policy for mobile and electronic communication reduces these risks.

### **Elements**

- Criteria for mobile and electronic communications between athletes and administrators, coaches, staff and/or volunteers
- Criteria for use of social media between athletes and administrators, coach, staff, and/or volunteers

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

As part of Treasure Coast Rowing Club's emphasis on athlete safety, electronic communications between a coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities, or information intended to improve the athletes performance such as information related to technique, training, or suggesting resources/reading.

**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 be provided to the athlete's parents or guardians.**

### **FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS AND SIMILAR SITES**

Athlete members and parents can friend the official Treasure Coast Rowing Club's 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.

Posts by athletes, coaches, or other club representatives should not be derogatory towards individual team

members or competitors on other teams. If an athlete, coach or club representative is notified that a post is derogatory, mean spirited, or otherwise objectionable, the post must be removed even if the original person that posted the content disagrees and feels the content is “just a joke”. Depending on the seriousness of the infraction, internal or external disciplinary action may be taken even if the post is removed.

Coaches are encouraged to use discretion regarding friending individual junior’s members. If the coach is likely to have posts that could not be distributed to all team juniors and their parents without causing discussions about appropriateness, then it is best that they refrain from friending junior team members.

#### **TWITTER, INSTAGRAM, INSTANT MESSAGING AND SIMILAR MEDIA**

Coaches and athletes may “follow” each other. Any content posted by a Treasure Coast Rowing Club representative to a minor should be of a nature that it could be shared with the parent.

Posts by athletes, coaches, or other club representatives should not be derogatory towards individual team members or competitors on other teams. If an athlete, coach or club representative is notified that a post is derogatory, mean spirited, or otherwise objectionable, the post must be removed even if the original person that posted the content disagrees and feels the content is “just a joke”. Depending on the seriousness of the infraction, internal or external disciplinary action may be taken even if the post is removed.

#### **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. It is the default policy of Treasure Coast Rowing Club to allow such practices if 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 of athletes whose parents have specifically requested that they do not want their child’s image used should not be posted in areas where public access could be reasonably anticipated.

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

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that photography or videography of their child not be released in areas where public access could be reasonably anticipated.

#### **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**

Depending on the severity of the violation of the Treasure Coast Rowing Club's Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy, the incident may be brought to the attention of the person in violation, or it may be elevated to a Treasure Coast Rowing Club coach, an officer of the Board of Directors, or through SafeSport reporting. Complaints and allegations will be addressed under Treasure Coast Rowing Club's Disciplinary Rules and Procedures.

## **CHANGING AREAS**

*Athletes (especially minors) are particularly vulnerable in locker rooms and changing areas due to various stages of dress/undress and because athletes are less supervised than at many other times.*

Athlete-to-athlete problems, such as child sexual abuse and bullying, harassment, and hazing, often occur when coaches or staff members are not monitoring athletes. This is especially true in changing areas.

### **THERE WILL BE NO USE OF A DEVICE'S RECORDING CAPABILITIES IN THE CHANGING AREAS.**

It is strongly advised that athletes come dressed for practice and change and shower at home.

## **MIXED-GENDER TEAM**

Treasure Coast Rowing Club consists of both male and female athletes. Male and female athletes should not be in the bath/shower room at the same time. In the extremely unusual circumstance that this may occur, (e.g. providing medical aid such as washing a cut) the door must remain open.

Violations of this policy may result in the sanctions, including but not limited to verbal reprimand, temporary or permanent suspension from competition.

## **TRAVEL**

Athletes are most vulnerable to misconduct during travel, particularly overnight stays. This includes a high risk of athlete-to-athlete misconduct. During travel, athletes are often away from their families and support networks, and the setting – new changing areas, locker rooms, workout facilities, automobiles and hotel rooms – is less structured and less familiar.

**NOTE - Treasure Coast Rowing Club athletes on the Juniors team are not allowed to drive themselves to events on the day that they compete. A combination of the physical exertion required to compete and a long day (usually out in the sun) create circumstances where sleepiness or drowsiness might be expected.**

## LOCAL AND TEAM TRAVEL

Treasure Coast Rowing Club does not sponsor, coordinate, or arrange overnight 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, staff members, coaches and/or volunteers, should not drive alone with an unrelated athlete and should 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. 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 other athlete(s). We encourage guardians to pick up their athlete first and drop off their athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.

Families are responsible for arranging hotels for their child. Families often travel with the athlete and act as chaperones for their child. In cases where the child is not accompanied by a parent or guardian, the individual family will arrange for acceptable accommodations that assure the safety of the athlete.

## *Strategy 5:*

### *Responding to Abuse, Misconduct and Policy Violations*

#### REPORTING

Although these policies are designed to reduce child sexual abuse and other misconduct, it can still occur. Staff members, volunteers and participants of the Treasure Coast Rowing Club shall follow the reporting procedures set forth in the Treasure Coast Rowing Club SafeSport document. **The Treasure Coast Rowing Club 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.**

#### 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).

## **REPORTING POLICY**

All adults associated with Treasure Coast Rowing Club, including coaches, volunteers, junior's parents, and TCRC masters members must report:

- (1) suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse
- (2) misconduct as defined in Treasure Coast Rowing Club 's SafeSport Athlete Protection Policy

As a matter of policy, Treasure Coast Rowing Club 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**

**Reporting of any type of abuse should be done through [TCRCsafesport@gmail.com](mailto:TCRCsafesport@gmail.com), or directed to a TCRC coach that you feel comfortable reporting to, an officer of the Treasure Coast Rowing Club Board of Directors, or directly to law enforcement.**

### ***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 reported.

### ***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.**

### **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, where it is unclear if the behavior should be reported to law enforcement authorities, it is the responsibility of each staff member and/or volunteer to report their observations to at least one of these:

- (1) [TCRCsafesport@gmail.com](mailto:TCRCsafesport@gmail.com),
- (2) a Treasure Coast Rowing Club coach

- (3) an officer of the Treasure Coast Rowing Club Board of Directors.
- (4) law enforcement

Upon getting a report of child physical or sexual abuse, TCRC officials will report it to relevant law enforcement authorities.

### **How to Report**

Treasure Coast Rowing Club 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 Treasure Coast Rowing Club for individuals to provide, at a minimum, (1) the type of misconduct alleged and (2) the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct.

### ***Reporting Form***

Individuals reporting child physical, sexual abuse or other misconduct may complete an Incident Report Form located near the back of this document. Treasure Coast Rowing Club will withhold the complainant's name on request, to the extent permitted by law.

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

### **Confidentiality**

To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, Treasure Coast Rowing Club 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.

### **Anonymous Reporting**

Treasure Coast Rowing Club 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 Treasure Coast Rowing Club administrator
- through email, texts or notes left for a Treasure Coast Rowing Club administrator

**However, anonymous reporting may make it difficult for Treasure Coast Rowing Club to investigate or properly address allegations.**

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

### **“Whistleblower” Protection**

Regardless of outcome, Treasure Coast Rowing Club will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. Treasure Coast Rowing Club will not encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate or punish in any way or 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.

## **HOW REPORTS ARE HANDLED**

### **Suspensions 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. Treasure Coast Rowing Club, 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, Treasure Coast Rowing Club 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).

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

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

The accused individual will be offered a hearing, but the hearing will not necessarily affect Treasure Coast Rowing Club's ability to immediately suspend access of the accused individual from performing services for the organization as the official investigation by authorities may take time to be concluded.

A staff member or volunteer's failure to report to a supervisor or a Treasure Coast Rowing Club administrator is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of a staff member and/or dismissal of a volunteer.

### **Misconduct and Policy Violations**

Treasure Coast Rowing Club addresses internally alleged policy violations and misconduct – bullying, harassment, hazing, emotional, physical and sexual misconduct that do not rise to the level where the investigation should be handled by relevant state or federal law.

## **NOTIFICATION**

Following Treasure Coast Rowing Club's notice of a credible allegation that results in the removal of an employee, coach, member or other volunteer, Treasure Coast Rowing Club may consider the circumstances in which it will notify other parents of athletes with whom the accused individual may have had contact. In Treasure Coast Rowing Club discretion, as appropriate, and after consultation with counsel, Treasure Coast Rowing Club 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 Treasure Coast Rowing Club is investigating internally. Advising others of an allegation may lead to additional reports of child physical or sexual abuse and other misconduct

## **DISCIPLINARY RULES AND PROCEDURES**

While Treasure Coast Rowing Club endeavors to provide support and guidance to participants on a day-to-day basis, it is important to have a formal procedure for disciplinary action to address alleged violations of its policies and other inappropriate behaviors.

Treasure Coast Rowing Club 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 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, Treasure Coast Rowing Club's disciplinary procedures and actions will be proportionate, reasonable and applied fairly and equally.

### **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

On receipt of an allegation, Treasure Coast Rowing Club will determine in its discretion 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.

Treasure Coast Rowing Club will address allegations against a staff member and/or volunteer under its Employment Policies and Procedures and Bylaws.

Treasure Coast Rowing Club's disciplinary response will depend on the nature and seriousness of the incident and in extreme cases, misconduct will result in immediate summary dismissal, provided that the accused individual shall be advised of their right to a hearing. If the accused individual is a minor, Treasure Coast Rowing Club will contact his or her parents or guardians for significant disciplinary issues.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Sanctions for violations will be proportionate and reasonable under the circumstances. Treasure Coast Rowing Club may take the following disciplinary actions, without limitation:



- Inform the individual's direct-line supervisor or, in the case of a youth participant, the youth's parent or guardian
- Provide the individual with guidance, redirection and instruction
- Temporary suspension from competition
- File a formal incident report
- Issue a verbal warning
- Issue a written and/or final written warning
- Implement a limited access agreement (e.g., limiting an individual's access to certain buildings or to youth)
- Provide informed supervision, where at least one staff member is informed of the allegation and is instructed to vigilantly supervise the accused participant or stakeholder in his or her interactions with the program and/or organization
- Engage in restorative practices, i.e., mediation and/or creation of a respectful and safe dialogue when a misunderstanding or harm has occurred
- Suspend or terminate employment or membership

#### **ONGOING EMPLOYMENT AND/OR PARTICIPATION**

On receipt of a credible and specific allegation of child abuse or other serious misconduct (e.g., physical and sexual abuse as defined in our Athlete Protection Policy), Treasure Coast Rowing Club may immediately suspend or terminate the accused individual to ensure participant safety.

#### **COMPLAINANT PROTECTION**

Regardless of outcome, Treasure Coast Rowing Club will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. Treasure Coast Rowing Club will not encourage or tolerate attempts to retaliate, punish or in any way harm any individual(s) who report a concern in good faith. Such actions will be grounds for disciplinary action.

#### **BAD-FAITH ALLEGATIONS**

Any individual who alleges misconduct under the Participant Safety Handbook that, upon review, is determined to be malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith will be a violation of our Participant Safety Handbook and be subject to disciplinary action.

#### **INVESTIGATION AND ADJUDICATION**

In most cases investigations by Treasure Coast Rowing Club are limited to non-mandatory reporting offenses.

Where serious allegations of misconduct are at issue (e.g., physical and sexual misconduct), Treasure Coast Rowing Club may elect in its discretion to gather information to determine what temporary measures are required. This may include a disciplinary hearing. **This investigation and/or hearing will in no way interfere with an ongoing criminal investigation or prosecution.**

#### **SUSPENSION BEFORE FINAL RESOLUTION**

If the reported complaint or employment/membership decision indicates that an individual's continued employment, membership or participation poses a risk of ongoing physical or emotional harm, Treasure

Coast Rowing Club may wish to suspend the accused individual pending final resolution of the complaint to eliminate any danger to an athlete, sport participant or other individual. In such instances, Treasure Coast Rowing Club will provide the individual with notice and offer her/him an opportunity to contest the suspension.

Treasure Coast Rowing Club may suspend the accused individual where there is a reasonable belief that the individual has committed emotional, physical or sexual misconduct. Evidence which may be found sufficient to support a reasonable belief includes, at a minimum:

- an Incident Report Form with specific and credible information
- other legal documentation or report supporting a reasonable belief that the individual has committed emotional, physical or sexual misconduct, including abuse of a child (e.g., a criminal indictment).

For the purposes of this Policy, a suspension from sport involvement shall mean that for the duration of the period of suspension, the accused individual may not participate in any capacity or in any role in the business, events, or activities of the Treasure Coast Rowing Club.

Any suspension before final resolution may be appealed by written request of the accused individual within 30 days of the suspension.

## INVESTIGATION

As appropriate, and at its discretion, Treasure Coast Rowing Club may institute a formal investigation and hearing procedure to address serious allegations of misconduct that are not mandatory-reporting issues and would not be appropriate to report to the authorities. However, Treasure Coast Rowing Club anticipates that a formal investigation and hearing will be undertaken to address only the most serious allegations and patterns of behavior that warrant significant sanctions. **Accordingly, Treasure Coast Rowing Club anticipates that this disciplinary procedure will be used rarely.**

If an investigation is conducted, the complainant, victim and accused individual shall have the right to:

- a) Receive written notice of the report or complaint, including a statement of allegations
- b) Present relevant information to the investigator(s)
- c) Legal counsel may be present for any of the parties involved, at his or her own expense

## HEARING

### Procedural Safeguards

The adjudication shall conform to the provisions and principles set out hereafter. However, deviations in one or more of the procedural safeguards are permitted, provided the following conditions are satisfied:

- a) The individual is informed of the allegations and evidence brought against him or her
- b) The individual is given a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations brought forward
- c) The individual may be represented by legal counsel at his or her expense
- d) The panel member(s) who make the determination are free of conflicts of interests and render an unbiased decision
- e) There is a right to appeal the panel's decision

**Preliminary Determination**

On receipt of a disclosure and/or additional information made pursuant to this Policy, if the SafeSport chairman/woman is satisfied, in the exercise of his or her discretion, that there is a sufficient reasonable, reliable and persuasive evidence to support the complaint alleging misconduct, he or she shall notify the entire SafeSport committee.

**Notice**

The individual involved will be notified of the allegations in writing and may respond in writing to the initial notice. If the incident is not immediately resolved, the accused individual will be notified of a specific date and time to ensure that he or she is available for the hearing. Unless the Review Panel requires the individual to attend the hearing in person, the individual may appear by telephone. The individual has the right to be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, provided that the counsel's participation may be subject to the reasonable hearing rules related to the conduct of the hearing.

**Timing**

The Review Panel shall have the authority to set timelines and other rules regarding the proceeding and the conduct of the hearing, as it deems necessary. On request of the accused individual, the Review Panel may render an expedited determination.

**Evidence**

At the hearing, the accused individual will be allowed to present any reasonable evidence or argument that he or she wishes the Panel to consider. The Panel may require or permit documentary evidence, such as the written report of any investigator or other fact-finder, before the hearing and that the names of any witnesses be disclosed before the hearing.

If the complainant/alleged victim(s) is a minor, the investigator's or other fact-finder's report may substitute for the minor witness's direct testimony, provided that the accused had an opportunity to present and respond to relevant information collected during the investigation and before the report was transmitted to the Review Panel.

The Review Panel may proceed in the accused individual's absence if it cannot locate the individual or if the individual declines to attend the hearing.

**Findings and Sanctions**

The Panel has the discretion to impose sanctions on the individual if it finds based on a preponderance of the evidence that misconduct has occurred.

The Panel will communicate its finding to the individual. The Panel may impose sanctions on the individual in its findings.

Any sanctions imposed by the Panel against the individual must be proportionate and reasonable, relative to the content that is found to have occurred. The decision regarding the appropriate sanction shall be up to the panel deciding each complaint. In imposing a sanction, the Review Panel shall consider:

- a) The legitimate interest of Treasure Coast Rowing Club providing a safe environment for its participants
  - b) The seriousness of the offense or act
  - c) The age of the accused individual and alleged victim when the offense or act occurred
  - d) Any information produced by the accused individual, or produced on behalf of the individual, in regard to the individual's rehabilitation and good conduct
  - e) The effect on the Treasure Coast Rowing Club's reputation
  - f) Whether the individual poses an ongoing concern for the safety of Treasure Coast Rowing Club athletes and participants
  - g) Any other information, which in the determination of the Panel, bears on the appropriate sanction
- Sanctions may range from a warning and a reprimand to suspension from sport involvement with the Treasure Coast Rowing Club for a period of time. Suspensions from sport involvement with Treasure Coast Rowing Club may be temporary or permanent. The most severe sanction possible to impose will be permanent suspension from sport involvement and expulsion from the Treasure Coast Rowing Club.

For the purposes of this Policy, a suspension from sport involvement shall mean that the individual may not participate in any capacity or in any role in the business, events or activities of the relevant organization or its affiliated members for the duration of the period of suspension.

### **Confidentiality**

The conduct of the hearing may be private. If the Panel determines that the individual has violated policy, it may publish its decision or a brief summary of its decision, unless the accused is a minor. However, if the individual appeals within 48 hours, the summary of the panel's decision will not be disclosed until an appellate decision has been made.

If the Panel determines the accused individual did not violate the relevant policy, the panel will publish a summary only at the individual's written request.

### **APPEAL**

If the individual disagrees with the finding or sanction of the panel and wishes to appeal, he or she may file an appeal in writing within 30 days to an officer of the board of directors (to avoid inclusion in meeting minutes, the appeal must be within 48-hours). On appeal, the merits of the decision de novo will be considered, and not the process that was utilized.

Once an appeal has been properly filed within the 30 day time limit, TCRC will assemble an "Appeal Panel" of 3 individuals not involved in the preliminary investigation to review the investigation findings and deliver a final decision via a majority vote. For reasons of impartiality, the "Appeal Panel" can be made up of members/officials from another local non-profit or athletic association. An appeal decision shall be final and binding on all parties.

## ***SAMPLE FORMS***

## **SAFESPORT REPORTING AND INCIDENT DESCRIPTION**

The Treasure Coast Rowing Club strongly encourages the reporting of misconduct and appreciates your willingness to report inappropriate behavior. The specific requests below may not be sufficient for all situations. Feel free to add any additional information that you believe is pertinent to the situation.

- (1) Name of Individual or Individuals you are reporting (First & Last):
- (2) Gender and approximate age of person being reported:
- (3) Association of person being reported to TCRC (for example: coach, masters club member, juniors team member, volunteer, juniors parent):
- (4) Date and location the offense occurred:
- (5) Category of offense (bullying, assault, sexual misconduct, etc):
- (6) Please describe what happened: (Who, What, When, Where, use additional paper if needed)

Information about the victim(s). If you are the victim and wish to remain anonymous, you may do so. In that case, please enter only your age.

- (7) Name of victim:
- (8) Age and sex of the victim:
- (9) Additional information you believe is relevant:

Provide contact information for the person reporting the incident. You may remain anonymous; however, providing your information is vastly helpful to a swift and effective investigation. A person reporting alleged misconduct should not fear retribution when filing a report he or she believes to be true. Coaches and directors at TCRC must provide contact information to facilitate the investigation.

- (10) Name
- (11) Phone
- (12) email
- (13) Club affiliation of person making the report (coach, masters club member, juniors team member, volunteer, juniors parent)

- (14) Relationship of person making the report to the victim (for example. self, parent, family member, coach, friend, team member, masters club member, juniors team member, volunteer, parent of another junior rower)

### INCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT FORM

<b>Incident:</b>	
<b>Reported By:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Individuals (s) Involved:</b>	

<b>Investigated By:</b>	
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<b>Location of Incident:</b>	
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<b>Summary of Complaint:</b>	
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**INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

<b>Statements Provided By:</b>	
<b>Conclusion:</b>	

<b>Recommendation:</b>	
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<b>Outside Agencies Involved:</b>	
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**ACTION TAKEN:**

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# ***APPENDIX:***

## ***Additional Resources***

### **Reporting**

- Child Information Gateway, [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)

### **Counseling**

- Childhelp, <http://www.childhelp.org>
- Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline: 1.800.4.A.CHILD (1.800.422.4453) (staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with professional crisis counselors)
- Child Molestation Prevention, <http://childmolestationprevention.org/pages.diagnosis/html>