



Child Safeguarding Policy

Virginia Amateur Sports & VA Commonwealth Games

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO

In-Program Contact: Any contact (including communications, interactions, or activities) between an Adult Participant and any Minor Athlete(s) related to participation in the Virginia Commonwealth Games. Examples include, but are not limited to competition, practices and tryouts.

Adult Participants: Any adult 18 years of age or older who is a:

- Virginia Commonwealth Games constituent, either athlete, coach, volunteer, staff, intern or other non-athlete

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL ABUSE & MOLESTATION

- Any sexual interaction, whether non-touching or touching, that is forced or perpetrated in an exploitative, harassing, aggressive, or threatening manner.
- Any sexual interaction between a participant and an individual with direct, indirect, or evaluative authority. Such relationships usually involve power imbalance; disparity in age, development, size, or intellectual capabilities; the existence of an aggressor and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative.
- Any conduct or acts defined under state or federal law as sexual abuse or misconduct.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

- Any staff member, participant, coach, volunteer or parent who has a reasonable suspicion of emotional or sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, hazing, or grooming behavior should report immediately such misconduct to the Virginia Commonwealth Games Executive Director.
- Virginia Commonwealth Games is committed to following the state and federal legal requirements with respect to reporting allegations or incidents of sexual abuse or misconduct to appropriate law enforcement and child or adult protective services organizations. It is the policy of Virginia Commonwealth Games not to attempt to investigate or assess the validity or credibility of an allegation of sexual or physical abuse as a condition before IMMEDIATELY reporting the allegation to proper law enforcement authorities or protective services organizations.
- Reports of all misconduct may be made orally or in writing. The information required is the name of complainant(s) making the report, the type of misconduct alleged, the name(s) of the accused Virginia Commonwealth Games constituents who allegedly engaged in the misconduct, the approximate dates of misconduct, and any other relevant information.

INVESTIGATIVE PROCEDURES

- Virginia Commonwealth Games will take all allegations of sexual abuse or misconduct seriously. Virginia Commonwealth Games will cooperate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory/protective services agencies.
- The confidentiality of the complaint, complainant, victim, and accused should be protected by the organization until the outcome of the proceedings is finalized. Notice should be given about any sanction. The investigator should not discuss the ongoing investigation with anyone other than for the purposes of gathering information related to the investigation unless requested otherwise by law enforcement or child protective services. Likewise, participants in the hearing should be requested to keep all information confidential unless requested by law enforcement or protective service agencies.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Sanctions applied should be appropriate and reasonable under the circumstances.

Sanctions that may be applied against a staff member, intern, coach (selected by the Virginia Commonwealth Games) or volunteer:

- Referral to law enforcement authorities if a crime is believed to have been committed.
- Dismissal from all Virginia Commonwealth Games events
- Temporary suspension pending investigation.

Sanctions that may be applied against a participant/coach (not selected by Virginia Commonwealth Games):

- Revocation of membership or participation in competitions
- Suspension of membership or participation in competitions pending investigation.

RETALIATION WARNING

- Whistle blowers who report misconduct suspicions in good faith should be protected against any retaliation, punishment, and other harm regardless of the outcome of any investigation. Anyone who retaliates is subject to disciplinary action.
- Likewise, complainants who act in bad faith in making malicious or frivolous allegations are subject to civil and criminal actions and disciplinary actions by the organization.

REQUIREMENT FOR ANNUAL REVIEW & SIGN OFF

- On an annual basis, each Virginia Commonwealth Games staff, intern, volunteer and coach will be provided with this Virginia Commonwealth Games policy along with an electronic sign off requirement that they have read the policy and agree to abide by it.

GENERAL POLICIES

Prohibited Behavior

Use of degrading language or behavior. Coaches are also responsible for stopping disrespectful behavior between team members, including sexual harassment. Threatening or intentionally inflicting physical injury upon anyone, especially a minor. Committing a sexual offense against a minor or engaging in sexual contact with a minor. Making any sexual or romantic advance, or engaging in other verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature with a minor.

Communication

All coaches, volunteers and staff will be instructed to keep all communications professional and only related to Virginia Commonwealth Games events or business.

Transportation

The lodging and transportation of all Virginia Commonwealth Games participants, team or individual, is the responsibility of the individual athlete and their family. Coaches selected by Virginia Commonwealth Games may not chaperone or coordinate any team related travel or transportation.

In-Program Medical Care: Certified Athletic Trainers and licensed physicians provide onsite medical care for the treatment of injuries during competition or practice during Virginia Commonwealth Games events. Pre and post competition rehabilitation, physical therapy, or other treatments are the responsibility of the individual participant and are not provided by Virginia Commonwealth Games. All minor participants and their legal guardians must sign a permission to treat form at the time of registration giving Virginia Commonwealth Games authority to provide medical assistance during events.

In-Program Massage: Virginia Commonwealth Games does not work with any massage related vendor or provide any massage related services for athletes.

VOLUNTEER TEAM SPORT COACHES

- A Virginia Commonwealth Games volunteer team sport coach is defined as a coach that is selected by the Virginia Commonwealth Games to select team members, conduct tryouts & practices and coach the team during Virginia Commonwealth Games competitions. Virginia Commonwealth Games selects team sport coaches for All Star Baseball.
- Virginia Commonwealth Games conducts background checks on all volunteer team sport coaches. All volunteer team sport coaches are also run through the Centralized Disciplinary Database developed by the US Center for SafeSport.
- Coaches must avoid one-on-one situations with current players and prospective players. Meetings, discussions, and drills should be conducted in view of other adults and/or youths. Coaches are prohibited from arranging one-on-one private meetings with any players unless another coach or the athlete's parent or guardian is also present.
- Coaches must avoid transporting players to and from tryouts, practices, or games. If this situation is unavoidable, coaches are required to obtain parental consent.
- While physical contact between coaches and current players and prospective players is not absolutely prohibited, as in "high-fives" when congratulating a youth for an accomplishment, coaches must be alert to, and ensure the appropriateness of all physical contact. It is possible that physical contact may be experienced by the youth or seen by others as inappropriate. For example, coaches should generally avoid hugging players. In the rare situation where a coach finds himself or herself being hugged by a player (for example, after a big win), coaches should ensure that the hugging is brief and appropriate (such as a "shoulder-to-shoulder" hug, maintaining space between bodies, rather than a "bear hug").
- Team sport coaches are prohibited from organizing, supervising, or chaperoning any team lodging for any Virginia Commonwealth Games event. Lodging and transportation are the sole responsibility of the individual team members and their family.
- All Virginia Commonwealth Games team sport coaches receive training materials and a Virginia Commonwealth coaches manual that includes training materials on all policies and procedures related to competition procedures and Virginia Commonwealth Games policies.

STAFF

- Virginia Commonwealth Games staff is defined as full-time employees of the organization and seasonal interns.
- All Virginia Commonwealth Games staff and interns are background checked annually.
- All Virginia Commonwealth Games staff and interns are required, annually, to take the U.S. Center for Safe Sport Training course which includes education on sexual misconduct awareness, mandatory reporting and physical / emotional misconduct.
- All Virginia Commonwealth Games Staff receive training materials and a staff / intern manual that includes materials on Virginia Commonwealth Games policies and operating procedures.

INDIVIDUAL and TEAM SPORT COACHES / ORGANIZERS

- Athletes participating in individual sports (figure skating, Track, Swimming, etc.) and team sports we do not select the coaches (basketball, softball, baseball – non all star, etc) compete as an individual and not as a member of a Virginia Commonwealth Games team. Virginia Commonwealth Games does not supply coaches or organize teams for these sports. Any involvement of a coach accompanying an athlete or team in an individual or team sports, we do not select the coach for, is outside the scope of the Virginia Commonwealth Games.
- Individual and team sport participants are responsible for their own transportation, training and preparation for Virginia Commonwealth Games events. No training, transportation, lodging or preparation support is provided by Virginia Commonwealth Games for any individual sport.
- Virginia Commonwealth Games follows the coach vetting, training, and participant safety requirements as required by the national governing body for each sport (US Figure Skating, US Track & Field, etc.)