

## SAFE ENVIRONMENT / ATHLETE PROTECTION POLICY

Delaware Football Club (DEFC) is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for all coaches, staff, volunteers, athletes and parents, as well as promoting an environment that is free of misconduct. Therefore, the following Policy has been set forth to promote a safe soccer environment, both solely and in partnership with other necessary parties, including staff, volunteers, parents and athletes.

**DEFC has “zero tolerance” for abuse, including inappropriate behavior and sexual misconduct, in its programs, activities and events.** All coaches, staff and volunteers shall abide by and adhere to all Delaware Youth Soccer policies, standards, rules procedures and guidelines pertaining to safe environments/athlete protection.

### *Definition of Abuse:*

Abuse, including child abuse, is defined in various sources, such as state statutes, case law, sports organization and professional association codes of conduct and training manuals, corporate and business workplace documents and human rights commission materials. Delaware Youth Soccer has not adopted any specific definition of abuse; rather, it has chosen to defer to such general sources and definitions for reference and application, depending upon the circumstances. Nonetheless, in general, the following conduct may be considered abusive:

### *Physical Abuse:*

1. Any physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes the participant to sustain bodily harm, including without limitation striking, hitting, kicking, biting, shaking, shoving, forcing an athlete to train or compete when injured or mandating excessive exercise as a form of punishment.
2. Any physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates a threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury.
3. Giving alcohol or inappropriate drugs to a participant.
4. Any violation of applicable law.

Physical contact that is reasonably intended to coach, teach or demonstrate a soccer skill or to prevent or lessen injury (e.g., assisting a player who has fallen to get back on his/her feet) does not constitute physical abuse. Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact particularly that which arises out of error on the part of the athlete or coach, does not constitute physical abuse.

***Sexual Abuse:***

1. Rape, incest, fondling, exhibitionism or sexual exploitation.
2. Any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, unwanted physical contact, unwelcome advances or request for sexual favors.
3. Any form of wanton or obscene gesturing, lewd remarks or indecent exposure.
4. Sexual abuse of a minor includes without limitation:
  - Touching a minor participant for the purpose of causing the sexual arousal or gratification of either person.
  - A minor participant touching any person, if the touching occurs at the request of or with the consent of such other person, for the sexual arousal or gratification of either person.
5. Neither consent of the participant to the sexual abuse or contact, mistake as to the participant's age, nor the fact that the sexual contact did not take place at a soccer function is a defense to a complaint of sexual abuse.
6. Sexual abuse also includes sexual misconduct, including:
  - Soliciting or engaging in sexual relations with any minor.
  - Engaging in any behavior that utilizes the influence of a professional member's position as coach, judge or administrator to encourage sexual relations with an athlete.
  - Engaging in sexual harassment by making unwelcome advances,

requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

7. Any violation of applicable law involving sexual misconduct or child abuse, or that is specifically designed to protect minors.

***Standards of Behavior:***

To Promote a safe soccer environment for DEFC activities and events, and to lessen the likelihood of an abusive situation, coaches, staff and volunteers must adhere to the following Standards of Behavior, as well as, sound teaching and training.

- Children are to be supervised at all times, including:
  - Children who are dropped off early; and
  - Children who are not picked up immediately after practice and/or games.
- DEFC personnel will never be alone with a child; two adults (one of whom may be a parent) are required to be present at all times.
  - This includes all travel situations, before and after practices and games, etc.
- All interactions (practices, games, competitions, classes, meetings, etc.) with a child shall be observable and interruptible at all times.
- Care should be taken to ensure that such physical contact is not invasive of sensitive areas of the body.
- Children may only be picked up from DEFC by a parent or other person designated by a parent.
- Parents are encouraged to become as active as reasonable possible in the activity/event.
- Out-of-program contact with athletes, such as babysitting, tutoring and ride

giving, is prohibited.

- Gift-giving or providing special favors or privileges to individual athletes is prohibited.
- Lap-sitting, tickling, back rubs, wrestling and other incidents of body contact that are inconsistent with the coach-athlete relationship are prohibited.
- Provision of alcohol or inappropriate drugs to athletes is prohibited.
- Electronic and social media communications with athletes must include the athlete's parent or guardian.

***Reporting:***

Any suspected physical or sexual/abuse or suspected violation of this policy or Delaware Youth Soccer's other safe environment/athlete protection-related policies, standards, rules, procedures and guidelines must be reported within twenty-four (24) hours, first to the Delaware Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families at 1-800-292-9582 and second, reported to the DEFC at [info@delawarefc.org](mailto:info@delawarefc.org).