

# Abuse Prevention Policy

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Effective Date: 12/1/2021  
Revision Number: 1

## Purpose

This policy establishes how **Spokane Youth Sports Association (SYSA)** will prevent the physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children and youth by its employees and volunteers. SYSA seeks to create a welcoming and nurturing environment and has zero tolerance for those whose actions may jeopardize the safety, health, or innocence of a minor.

## DEFINITIONS

Abuse: Because it takes many forms, abuse can be broken down into the following subtypes, all of which are prohibited within the scope of this policy:

- Physical abuse: Injury inflicted on a child or youth
- Sexual abuse: Contact or activity of a sexual nature between an adult and a child or youth
- Emotional abuse: Mental or emotional injury inflicted on a child or youth by the actions of an adult
- Neglect: Failure to provide adequate care for a child or youth
- Economic abuse: Deliberate misuse of the money or belongings of a child or youth

Child: A child is defined as anyone under the age of 12. Youth: A youth is defined as anyone between 12 and 18 years of age.

## POLICY GUIDELINES

### Employment/Personnel Screenings

Safeguards in the hiring process will be used to eliminate from consideration any candidates who display characteristics that could classify them at a high risk for violating this policy.

### For those who regularly work with or around children or youth

Candidates for positions that involve regular interaction with children or youth will be screened and selected using the following:

- Standard employment application that includes signed authorization to perform necessary background checks
- Criminal background checks
- Sexual offender registry checks
- In-person interview of the candidate
- If hired, criminal and sexual offender registry checks will be conducted every five years for those who regularly work with children or youth.

### Structural Guidelines for SYSA Programs

All SYSA programs are designed to encourage safe interaction between employees or volunteers and children or youth. The following guidelines are meant to keep established safeguards effective:

- Programs for children and youth must have an established adult to child ratio.

- Employees and volunteers are restricted from being alone with a child or youth where they cannot be easily observed by others.
- Employees and volunteers are not allowed to implement new activities or programs for children without SYSA consent. Request for new activities or programs should be submitted in writing to management.
- Written permission must be obtained from a parent or guardian before any employee or volunteer transports a child or youth in the name of SYSA.
- Children under the age of six placed in the care of SYSA will only be released to a parent, legal guardian or a person designated by a parent or legal guardian.

## **General Conduct**

In an effort to provide a safe and healthy environment for both mind and body, the following guidelines are meant to guide SYSA employees and volunteers during their interactions with children and youth. These guidelines do not and cannot outline every situation that may be encountered, requiring employees and volunteers to act with a certain degree of personal discretion. Because a certain action is not prohibited in this section does not mean it is acceptable behavior. SYSA reserves the right to take disciplinary action against employees and volunteers whose actions are found to be inappropriate regardless of whether they appear in this section:

- Employees and volunteers will treat all children and youth with respect and consideration. Treatment must be fair and equal, and must not be based on sex, race, religion, sexual orientation or economic or social status. All effort must be made to avoid favoritism, or the appearance of favoritism.
- While representing SYSA, employees and volunteers must not possess, distribute, use or allow others to use any alcohol or drugs.
- Employees and volunteers must not use harsh or inappropriate language, degrading punishment or any type of restraining device in the name of behavior management.
- Employees and volunteers must not participate in or allow others to engage in any form of hazing.
- Employees and volunteers must not have sexual contact with children or youth.
- Employees and volunteers must not dress, undress, shower or bathe with or in the presence of children or youth.
- Employees and volunteers must not use physical punishment in any form. The only time physical force is allowed to be used against a child or youth is when their actions are placing others at an immediate risk for serious harm.
- Employees and volunteers must not discuss their own sexual history, preferences or fantasies nor their use of illicit or pornographic materials while in the company of children or youth.
- Employees and volunteers are not allowed to possess any sexually oriented materials (books, magazines, videos, clothing) when conducting business in the name of SYSA.
- When one-on-one discussion or counseling is warranted, employee or volunteer interaction with a child or youth will take place in an area that allows for private conversation while remaining in the view of others.

If, for any reason, an employee or volunteer feels there is a need to make an exception to these guidelines, they must submit to SYSA a written description of the incident and why their actions were necessary. Their report will be reviewed for wrongdoing. A copy of the original report along with any additional findings made by the reviewer will be included in the employee's permanent file.