

## **NOTEWORTHY REVISIONS TO THE 2025 SKATESAFE® HANDBOOK**

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE: January 1, 2025**

U.S. Figure Skating is required to ensure its abuse prevention policies meet the minimum requirements of the U.S. Center for SafeSport's Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies. With the Center updating its requirements for 2025, U.S. Figure Skating's SkateSafe® Handbook has been updated accordingly and was approved by the U.S. Center for SafeSport in December 2024. In addition to changes required by the U.S. Center for SafeSport, additional edits were made for clarity based on member feedback.

This document outlines the noteworthy changes to the latest version SkateSafe® Handbook which will go into effect on January 1, 2025. The section title and page number listed within this document correlate to the applicable section and page in the updated SkateSafe® Handbook.

Questions regarding these changes can be directed to [skatesafe@usfigureskating.org](mailto:skatesafe@usfigureskating.org).

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **PART 2: DEFINITIONS (page 2)**

**Adult Participant:** The definition was updated to remove "identified by U.S. Figure Skating as being within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport." Individuals previously covered under this portion of the definition are covered by other sections of the definition.

**Billeting:** The U.S. Center for SafeSport requires all NGBs to include this new definition of the term Billeting. The definition also includes prohibitions regarding Billeting within U.S. Figure Skating.

**Participant:** A portion of this definition ("Identified by U.S. Figure Skating as being within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Center for SafeSport") was removed as these individuals are included in other sections of the definition.

**Residential Environment:** This is a new term added to the SkateSafe® Handbook to outline what type of lodging, besides just hotels, must be considered in relation to SkateSafe® policy application during travel or lodging.

#### **PART 3: THE U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT (page 6)**

The cited statutes were edited to accurately reflect the applicable statute numbers.

### **II. ATHLETE AND MEMBER PROTECTION POLICIES (page 6)**

References to "Athlete Protection Policies" throughout the Handbook were updated to "Athlete and Member Protection Policies" to ensure it's clear that the abuse prevention policies are in place to help prevent abuse and misconduct of all members, regardless of role. Additionally, a statement was added that the Athlete and Member Protection Policies apply to all Adult Participants, regardless of role.

#### **POLICY EXCEPTIONS**

**CLOSE-IN-AGE EXCEPTION:** A clarification was added stating that this policy exception only applies to the policies outlined within the SkateSafe® Handbook and that it is not an exception regarding conduct as defined in the U.S. Center for SafeSport's Code.

**EXCEPTIONS FOR DUAL RELATIONSHIPS:** A statement regarding parent/permanent legal guardian consent was added to require the application for a Dual Relationship to be considered must identify the policies the parent/permanent legal guardian is requesting the exemption for.

Emergency Exceptions: A policy exception for emergency circumstances was added along with a guide to self-reporting policy violations related to emergencies.

## PART 1: TWO-DEEP LEADERSHIP

- Condensed the outline of what two-deep leadership is for conciseness and clarity

## PART 2: REQUIRED POLICIES FOR LIMITING ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS WITH MINOR ATHLETES (page 8)

**OUT-OF-PROGRAM CONTACT:** A section regarding Out-of-Program Contact and recommended practices related to Adult Participants and unrelated Minor Athletes and their interactions outside of the context of sport was added for clarification purposes.

**APPROPRIATE ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS:** A clarification was added stating that a documented policy exception would apply to the One-on-One Interactions policy requirements.

**MEETINGS:** A clarification was added stating that a documented policy exception would apply to the One-on-One Interactions policy as it relates to meetings between an Adult Participant and an unrelated Minor Athlete.

**Parent/Permanent Legal Guardian Training:** Throughout the One-on-One Interactions Required Policies section, an addition was made stating that it is strongly recommended that the parent/permanent legal guardian of a Minor Athlete completes the U.S. Center for SafeSport's education and training on child abuse prevention before providing consent for their Minor Athlete to have a One-on-One Interaction with an Adult Participant subject to the SkateSafe® policies.

**GIFTING:** This section was expanded for clarity. The requirement that the parent/permanent legal guardian of a Minor Athlete must consent to any personal gift being given to the Minor Athlete by an Adult Participant was expanded to include the example of a permitted birthday or a holiday gift that may be personal to the skater.

## PART 3: ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY (page 9)

This section was condensed for clarity and conciseness. An additional requirement was added that all electronic communication between a Minor Athlete and an Adult Participant must be "Open and Transparent."

Additionally, a definition for "Open and Transparent" was added (the Adult Participant copies or includes the Minor Athlete's parent/permanent legal guardian, another family member of the Minor Athlete, or another Adult Participant (i.e., an Adult Athlete, Team Leader or Coach) on every communication where there is no applicable or approved policy exception). A requirement that only platforms that allow for Open and Transparent communication be used for Adult Participants to communicate with Minor Athletes was added (when an applicable or approved policy exception does not exist).

For clarity, instructions were added on what an Adult Participant should do/how they can respond if a Minor Athlete communicates with them electronically without copying one of the required adults as outlined above.

**SOCIAL MEDIA:** The title of this section was changed from "Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and Similar Social Media" to "Social Media" to encompass more platforms that are available. Additionally, this section was updated to better reflect how social media connections work generally, rather than being specific to certain platforms.

The previous social media connections policy was edited for clarity, prohibiting Adult Participants who do not have an applicable or approved policy exception from having private social media connections with a Minor Athlete. Examples of

An explanation of what "private social media connections" are was added (those not visible to the public – i.e., Snapchat). Examples of permissible social media connects were also added (public accounts where connections are visible – i.e., public Facebook or Instagram accounts).

A recommendation was added stating that Adult Participants should not publicly share or post photos or videos of Minor Athlete(s) if the Adult Participant has not obtained consent from the parent/permanent legal guardian and the Minor Athlete.

## **PART 4: LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS (page 10)**

**LOCKER ROOM CONDUCT:** The policy previously stated that the use of any recording or photographic device inside a locker room/changing area was strictly prohibited. This was updated to state that no Adult Participant or Minor Athlete can use the photographic or recording capabilities of any device in any area designated as a place for changing clothes or undressing. (Using devices such as cell phones or tablets would be permitted, so long as the recording or photographic capabilities are not utilized.)

A statement that “members of the media and championship celebrations in a locker room intended for changing is prohibited” was added. Championship celebrations are described as celebrations where photographic or recording devices would be used to document the celebration.

**CLUB AND PROGRAM LOCKER ROOM SIGNAGE:** This section was edited to add “Program” in the title to encompass all activities that are covered by this requirement.

The signage requirement relating to the use of mobile and digital devices in a changing area was edited to match the updates outlined above prohibiting only the use of the recording or photographic capabilities of the device.

With many clubs, programs, and events using “Ready Rooms,” clarification regarding what a Ready Room was added (a locker room used for warm-up that is intended to be co-ed and shall not be used for undressing/changing).

## **PART 5: SKATESAFE® TRAVEL POLICY – LODGING AND TRANSPORTATION (page 12)**

**TRANSPORTATION:** A requirement that Adult Participants must ensure that all In-Program Contact during Transportation is observable and interruptible (i.e., travel to/from the rink, airport, hotel, etc.)

The Two-Deep Leadership requirements during travel were clarified and expanded to state that an Adult Participant cannot transport a Minor Athlete on-on-one, and that Two-Deep Leadership during travel is met by transporting at least two minors who are at least 8 years of age, or by transporting the Minor Athlete and another Adult.

**LODGING AND RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS:** This section was expanded for clarity and to include hotel stays, rentals, Billeting, and long-term residential environments, including lodging at training sites.

Additionally, a clarification was added that Adult Participants are only permitted to share a lodging arrangement (regardless of arrangement type) with a Minor Athlete if a policy exception exists and the parent/permanent legal guardian has provided consent specific to each lodging arrangement. That parent/permanent legal guardian consent can be withdrawn at any time.

A separate section was added to cover “Monitoring” to give guidance on how room checks must be conducted if they occur.

An “Additional Requirements” section was added regarding an Adult Participant’s assumed Authority over Minor Athlete(s) they travel overnight with and the applicable requirement for education and training.

A new statement was included recommending that the parent/permanent legal guardian of the Minor Athlete complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport’s education and training on child abuse prevention before providing consent for lodging arrangements under the applicable policy.

**TEAM LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES:** This section was moved to a separate policy as it only applied to Team USA.

## **PART 6: MANUAL THERAPY, THERAPEUTIC AND RECOVERY MODALITIES, AND MEDICAL EVALUATIONS AND TREATMENTS (page 14)**

The title of this section was expanded to encompass the various types of evaluations and treatments an athlete may receive during a U.S. Figure Skating event or activity.

A clarification was added stating that all of the SkateSafe® Policies must be adhered to during In-Program treatments, in addition to what's included in this section that is specific to treatments.

A new requirement from the U.S. Center for SafeSport was added stating that when treating a Minor Athlete, the provider must narrate the steps in the modality before taking them, seeking assent of the Minor Athlete throughout the process.

A recommendation was added that the parent/permanent legal guardian of a Minor Athlete complete the U.S. Center for SafeSport's education and training on child abuse prevention before providing consent for their Minor Athlete to receive manual therapy, a therapeutic modality, or a recovery modality.

## **III. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS**

### **PART 2: ADULT PARTICIPANT COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS (page 16)**

**BACKGROUND CHECKS:** This section was condensed as it now refers out to a stand-alone U.S. Figure Skating Board Approved policy relating to background checks (this policy can be found at [www.usfigureskating.org/skatesafe](http://www.usfigureskating.org/skatesafe)).

**SAFESPORT™ TRAINING:** This section was edited to mimic the U.S. Center for SafeSport's verbiage regarding training requirements – no changes were made to the requirements. Additional information was included regarding training exemptions and optional training.

**VERIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE:** This section was condensed and now refers out to standalone documents related to checking compliance. These resource documents can be found at [www.usfigureskating.org/skatesafe](http://www.usfigureskating.org/skatesafe).