

BCSFYAO Youth Protection Policy

How does the YAO prevent child abuse in sport activities?

The BCSFYAO has adopted a number of policies aimed at eliminating opportunities for abuse within the sports programs. These policies focus on leadership selection and on placing barriers to abuse within the program.

Leadership

The BCSFYAO takes great pride in the quality of our adult leadership. Being a coach or manager in the YAO is a privilege, not a right. The quality of the program and the safety of our youth members call for high-quality adult leaders. We work closely with our sponsoring organization to help recruit the best possible coaches and managers for their teams.

The coach's application will be reviewed by the appropriate commissioner and coaching committee.

Barriers to Abuse Within YAO

The BCSFYAO has adopted the following policies to provide additional security for our members. These policies are primarily for the protection of our youth members; however, they also serve to protect our adult leaders from false accusations of abuse.

Note: Bold type denotes rules and policies.

- **Two-deep leadership.** Two recognized (by YAO) adult leaders or one recognized leader and a parent of a participant, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required on all trips and outings. The team is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.
- **No one-on-one contact.** One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is not permitted. In situations that require personal conferences, such as a coach's conference, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youths.
- **Respect of privacy.** Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.
- **Separate accommodations.** When traveling, no youth is permitted to sleep in the same room with an adult other than his own parent or guardian. Teams are strongly encouraged to have separate facilities for females. When separate facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers.
- **Proper preparation for away activities.** Activities with travel or elements of risk should never be undertaken without proper preparation, equipment, clothing, supervision, and safety measures.

- **No secret organizations or initiations.** The BCSFYAO does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its programs. All aspects of the sports program are open to observation by parents and leaders. For example: No exclusionary activities or special initiations.
- **Appropriate attire and safety equipment.** Proper clothing for activities is required.
- **Constructive discipline.** Discipline used in coaching should be constructive and reflect YAO's values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.
- **Hazing prohibited.** Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any sports activity.

How can parents help protect their children?

Parents participate in the protection of their children in a variety of ways. YAO recognizes the need for open lines of communication so that children are encouraged to bring any troubles to their parents for advice and counsel. In addition, parents need to be involved in their child's sports activities. All parents receive important information concerning the sports program as part of their child's membership applications and member's handbook. This information is provided so that parents can detect any deviations from the YAO's approved policies and programs. If any deviations are noted, parents should call these to the attention of the commissioners or the YAO Board. If the problems persist, parents should contact the President or Vice-President for assistance.

Why do most child victims of sexual abuse keep the abuse secret?

A victim of child sexual abuse is under a great deal of pressure to keep the abuse secret. In many cases of child molestation, the molester has threatened to harm the child or a member of the child's family. The molester might have told the child that he would not be believed even if the child did tell. Another common situation is that the molester will tell the child that if the child tells about the abuse, he will get into trouble. The clear message is given to the child that if another person finds out, something bad will happen to the child. This pressure to maintain silence can often be successfully overcome by establishing open communication between children and adults through a proper educational program for children.

What should I do if a child tells me that he has been sexually abused?

How an adult responds to a child when he tries to disclose abuse can influence the outcome of the child's victimization. By maintaining an apparent calm, the adult can help reassure the child that everything is going to be okay. By not criticizing the child, we counteract any statements the molester made to the victim about the child getting into trouble. Reassure the child that you are concerned about what happened to him and that you would like to get him some help. Allegations by a child concerning abuse in the program should be reported to a representative of YAO (coach, manager, board officer). Once a coach or manager is aware of any allegations, they must report this information to the YAO Officers and the appropriate legal authorities. Since these reports are required, the child should be told that you have to tell the proper authorities but

that you will not tell anyone else. It is important that you not tell anyone other than the YAO Officers or the child protective services agency about allegations of abuse.

How do I know what my reporting responsibilities are?

Every state, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories have different reporting requirements. People are often concerned about being sued for reporting child abuse. You are not required to know for certain that a child has been abused. All that the law requires is that you have a reasonable suspicion and are reporting in "good faith." When these requirements are met, all states provide immunity from liability for child abuse reporters.

What are the "three R's" of Youth Protection?

The "three R's" of Youth Protection convey a simple message that the YAO wants its youth members to learn:

- Recognize situations that place him at risk of being molested, how child molesters operate, and that anyone could be a molester.
- Resist unwanted and inappropriate attention. Resistance will stop most attempts at molestation.
- Report attempted or actual molestation to a parent or other trusted adult. This prevents further abuse of their self and helps to protect other children. Let the child know he will not be blamed for what occurred.

Youth Member Behavior Guidelines

The BCSFYAO is a values-based youth development organization that helps young people learn positive attributes of character, citizenship, and personal fitness. The YAO has the expectation that all participants in the sports programs will relate to each other in accord with the principles embodied in the BCSFYAO Mission Statement and Philosophy.

One of the developmental tasks of childhood is to learn appropriate behavior. Children are not born with an innate sense of propriety and they need guidance and direction. The example set by positive adult role models is a powerful tool for shaping behavior and a tool that is stressed in sports.

Misbehavior by a single youth member on a team may constitute a threat to the safety of the individual who misbehaves as well as to the safety of other team members. Such misbehavior constitutes an unreasonable burden on a team and cannot be ignored.

Member Responsibilities

All members of the BCSFYAO are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles set forth in the YAO Policies and Guidelines. Physical violence, hazing, bullying, theft, verbal insults, and use of drugs or alcohol have no place in the sports program and may result in the revocation of a player's membership in the team.

If confronted by threats of violence or other forms of bullying from other youth members, members should seek help from their team's coach, manager or parents.

Team Responsibilities

Adult leaders of YAO teams are responsible for monitoring the behavior of youth members and interceding when necessary. Parents of youth members who misbehave should be informed and asked for assistance in dealing with it.

The YAO does not permit the use of corporal punishment by team leaders when disciplining youth members.

The commissioners should review repetitive or serious incidents of misbehavior in consultation with the parents of the child to determine a course of corrective action including possible revocation of the youth's membership in the team.

If problem behavior persists, teams may revoke a player's membership on that team. When a team revokes a player's membership, it should promptly notify the commissioner and executive board of the action.

The team should inform the commissioner about all incidents that result in a physical injury or involve allegations of sexual misconduct by a youth member with another youth member.

Resources

San Francisco Department of Human Services

<http://www.sfhsa.org/reportabuse.htm>

Child Abuse Hotline

(415) 558-2650 or (800) 856-5553

Suspicion or concerns of child abuse or neglect should be reported to the confidential 24-hour child abuse hotline. The reporter will be asked to provide the name, address and approximate age of the child and to describe the situation that prompted the call. The hotline staff determines if a child is at risk of abuse or neglect. The hotline is also a source of information and referral for callers.

The San Francisco Department of Human Services works to protect children, elders and disabled adults from abuse or neglect. You can make a confidential report to one of two 24-Hour Hotlines if you know or suspect that a child, elder or adult with disability is being abused or neglected. Your call is answered by a social worker who will ask a series of questions to determine if an Emergency Response is required. If someone appears to be in imminent danger, an Emergency Response Worker will be dispatched immediately to make a home visit, investigate the report, and determine what action must be taken, if any.

Family Resource Centers

HSA contracts with neighborhood-based Family Resource Centers to provide parent education, mentoring, case management and counseling services, along with childcare and other activities which serve to strengthen families and improve the well-being of children.

Asian Pacific Islander Family Resource Network

TalkLine Family Support Center - Lead Agency:

San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center

1757 Waller Street

(415) 441-KIDS (5437)

Families, parents and caregivers with children under age 18. Family and Youth Services

Women Against Rape: Community Initiative Program

Janelle White, Ph.D. Executive Director

Free presentations and Support Services; Providers for youths and adults

www.sfwar.org

Phone: (415) 861-2024

Provides popular interactive education to young people and adults, while supporting the development of community derived and driven initiatives that emphasize collective responsibility, healing, and transformation. Community Initiatives is predicated on the belief that only when an entire community takes responsibility for making abuse unacceptable will all people live a life free of sexual violence.

Provides Individual peer counseling, support groups, medical and legal advocacy, 24 hour hotline, case management, referrals