



**Summary of National Junior Safety Handbook, entitled**  
***Recognizing, Reducing and Responding to Misconduct in Our Sport***  
***And Creating a Healthy, Supportive Environment for Junior Orienteers***

*A product of the Junior Safety Committee of Orienteering USA  
with assistance from the US Olympic Committee and its program, SafeSport.*

Adults working with juniors need to prevent bullying, harassment and hazing, as well as emotional, physical and sexual misconduct. All of these are intolerable and harmful. The SafeSport video training is a first step in educating all of us in defining the problem and how to deal with it. The absence of clear behavioral boundaries is a significant risk factor for misconduct. If inappropriate conduct is not clearly defined, unacceptable situations may otherwise be tolerated and no action taken. An athlete protection policy creates a safe and positive environment for athletes. It also emphasizes and sets forth standards of behavior that clearly outline unacceptable behaviors, minimize opportunities for misconduct, and help to prevent unfounded allegations.

Staff members, volunteers, athletes and participants shall refrain from all forms of misconduct, which include:

- 1) **BULLYING** An intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing or willfully tolerating physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership. These include behaviors such as: hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, or slapping; or throwing at, or hitting an athlete with, objects, including any type of orienteering gear. Bullying also includes such behaviors as teasing, ridiculing, intimidating, spreading rumors or making false statements using electronic communications, social media, or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate (“cyber bullying”).
- 2) **HARASSMENT** A repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance, offend or degrade, create a hostile environment or reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression or mental or physical disability.
- 3) **HAZING** Coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for joining a group or being socially accepted by a group’s members.
- 4) **PHYSICAL MISCONDUCT** Contact or noncontact conduct that results in, or reasonably threatens to cause, physical harm to an athlete or other sport participants, any act or conduct described as physical abuse. Physical misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, teambuilding, appropriate discipline or improving athlete performance. High-fives and side hugs celebrating a good race are not considered physical misconduct. A specific policy addressing alcohol consumption is included.
- 5) **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT** Any touching or nontouching sexual interaction that is nonconsensual, forced, coerced, manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner. Any sexual interaction between an athlete and where there is an imbalance of power is always inappropriate. Note: An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete. All sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited. Touching offenses include fondling and any sexual contact. There also should be no discussing of sex lives, exchange of sexual pictures, and similar behaviors.
- 6) **EMOTIONAL MISCONDUCT** Any verbal or physical act that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to the athlete, which includes denial of attention or support. Emotional misconduct includes insults or repeated derogatory remarks, repeated yelling or banging, throwing items, and other “acting out” behaviors.



**Every Responsible Adult and Junior Captain** must act to protect our Juniors. Everyone must be aware of high-risk activities and areas, appropriate one-to-one interactions and prohibited one-to-one interactions and take measures if there are issues.

During training and competition, one-to-one interactions should be minimized to create a safe environment and to protect athletes and leaders. Individual meetings should generally occur in publicly visible, open areas such as spectator areas, pavilions, parking lots, hotel lobbies or restaurants. If a meeting occurs in a room, the door should remain unlocked and ajar. If a person is given individual training sessions, it should be with different coaches so that there isn't time for an individual to "groom" someone toward inappropriate behavior. Generally, the "rule of three" should be used: one adult with more than one junior or one junior with more than one adult.

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT takes place in public with no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies. Physical contact is to be only for the benefit of the athlete, not the emotional or other need of an adult. Appropriate physical contact includes such things as positioning an athlete's body so that they more quickly acquire an athletic skill, get a better sense of where their body is in space, or improve their balance and coordination, positioning an orienteer's fingers and thumbs on a map with a compass, releasing muscle cramps, removing a tick or thorn from a location the athlete cannot reach or taping an ankle.

It is always appropriate to express the joy of participation, competition, achievement and victory through physical acts such as high-fives, fist bumps, brief hugs and pats on the back. It may be appropriate to console an emotionally distressed athlete (e.g., an athlete who has been injured or has just lost a competition). Appropriate consolation includes publicly embracing a crying athlete, putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down or lifting a fallen athlete off the playing surface and "dusting them off" to encourage them to continue competition.

Inappropriate contact includes such things as asking or having an athlete sit in the lap, lingering or repeated embraces of athletes that go beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact, physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from an athlete, "cuddling" or maintaining prolonged physical contact during any aspect of training, travel or overnight stay, tickling or "horseplay" wrestling or any continued physical contact that makes an athlete obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed verbally or not.

Changing Areas for orienteering athletes is an issue. Common sense should rule and no recording device should be used. One adult should not be changing in proximity to one youth, especially out of a public area, and males and females should dress and undress in separate areas.

When an individual is not abiding by the norms of behavior, their actions **MUST** be reported to a supervisor or member of the Junior Safety Committee. Violations will be addressed under our Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

Basically, juniors should feel safe. If they feel that something is strange or "not right" they should be encouraged to discuss this with other responsible adults or team leaders. If situations are discussed before they become real issues, then everyone will be safe. You, as a chaperone or leader involved in working with juniors, are on the front line of keeping our kids safe. It is important that you act if you feel that something is not right. Small things may be part of a larger problem. Don't just sweep things under the rug. Talk with someone about your concerns: the coach, a member of the Safety Committee or another responsible adult. This must be done confidentially but it must be done. We are very concerned about the safety of our junior orienteers and everyone must work toward their safety.