

## CHILD AND VOLUNTEER PROTECTION ADVOCATE

The Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate(s) shall be responsible for overseeing the child protection program in accordance with AYSO Guidelines and act as the main resource on child and volunteer protection issues within the region. As the region's liaison with the Coordinator of Child Protection Advocacy at the AYSO Education Department, he/she shall keep the region apprised of certification requirements for volunteers and new developments affecting the region's Child Protection Policy.

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### *ADMINISTRATION*

1. Region 73 is committed to the protection of all its children from all forms of abuse and neglect while participating in the program and it promotes the awareness and prevention of child abuse in the community at large.
2. Region 73 shall have a Child Protection Advocate, who shall be responsible for overseeing the child protection program in accordance with AYSO guidelines. He or she shall be a member of the regional board and will act as the main resource on child protection issues and shall be the region's liaison with the Coordinator of Child Protection Advocacy at the AYSO Education Department.
3. **Region 73 requires all volunteers to complete, date, and sign the appropriate volunteer application form and its authorization yearly to AYSO in order to perform applicant screening. All volunteers shall be screened at a level appropriate to the level of risk.**
4. Region 73 shall have the right to revoke the participation of any individual who lies or knowingly misrepresents information on the application form, or who violates the principles of these child protection policies. AYSO shall have the right to revoke both the registration and certification of any volunteer who falsifies information, is found guilty of child abuse, or fails to fill in and return the volunteer application form.
5. The complaint, grievance, and appeal process shall be as described in the regional guidelines, with the addition of appeal to AYSO if it is the screening agency. The names and identities of the claimant and the defendant shall be protected at all times during the proceedings. The claimant need not be present to give evidence at any ensuing hearing, thus avoiding victimizing the child a second time.
6. A volunteer accused of abuse will be asked to resign voluntarily. If the volunteer refuses, the board will move to suspend the volunteer until the matter has been resolved. Regardless of civil or criminal guilt for the alleged child abuse, the continued presence of the volunteer in the program will damage the reputation of the region, even during the investigation and pretrial phase.
7. A volunteer accused of child abuse but subsequently cleared may apply for reinstatement in the region. However, reinstatement is not a right, and reinstated volunteers are not guaranteed to return to their former positions.

## ***TRAINING***

1. All coaches, referees, team parents, other volunteers who work directly with children, and the child protection advocate shall be trained before working with children. Head coaches, assistant coaches, team parents, and referees shall be certified for each specific function prior to participating in such capacity within Region 73 and the AYSO program.
2. Only official AYSO materials and courses (or those approved by AYSO) may be used to train and certify these key volunteers.
3. Properly signed rosters of attendees will be sent to AYSO Education to validate each attendee's training, and certification, and to insure that the coaches and referees are registered with AYSO.
4. Courses and clinics shall be taught by AYSO certified and registered teachers and instructors, or be under the supervision of AYSO trained instructors. Only official AYSO programs, procedures, and policies will be taught.
5. Other volunteers will be trained before they do their jobs, including child protection training as appropriate. Whenever possible, "on the job training" will be avoided.
6. Volunteers shall be subject to ongoing evaluation, and additional training may be required to maintain good standing within the region and the organization.

## ***SUPERVISION***

1. The coach administrator and referee administrator shall cooperate with the child protection advocate(s), to ensure the safety of the region's players.
2. The coach administrator and the child protection advocate annually shall meet with the head coach of each team, either jointly or separately, to review child protection and supervision responsibilities.
3. The coach administrator shall observe and review the performance of coaches to see that it conforms to the standards set by this child protection policy.
4. The head coach of each team shall be responsible for assuring that at least two responsible adults (one of whom may be the coach) are with his or her team at all times (See #6 for supervision ratio). The head coach is also responsible for informing assistant coaches and team parent about child protection issues, supervision ratios, and reporting procedures.
5. Once the head coach has assumed charge of the children on his or her team, he or she remains responsible until a duly designated adult has taken charge of each child after practice or a game. No child shall be left unsupervised after a game or practice. Parents who are unreasonably late or consistently tardy should be reported to the child protection advocate for action. Each coach may establish a standing policy of where children may be picked up by late parents.
6. The supervision ratio shall be 1:8 or less; that is, one adult for every eight or fewer children, with the stipulation that there be two Safe Haven trained adults present at all times, and one of the adults must be of the same sex as the child.

7. The referee administrator and the child protection advocate annually shall meet with the referees, either jointly or separately, to review child protection and supervision responsibilities.
8. The referee administrator shall observe and review the performance of the referees to see that it conforms to the standards set by this child protection policy.
9. The referee and assistant referee(s) are responsible for providing a “child safe” atmosphere for the match they officiate, and have both the duty and authority to take any reasonable action to make it so. The referee is to report to the referee administrator and child protection advocate any cases of questionable conduct toward children by any coach, player, parent, sibling, or spectator before, during, or after the match. The referee decides the severity of the act and will complete a written report with his assistant referee(s) within half an hour after the match finishes. The referee will hand the report to the CVPA or the referee administrator. Assistant referees have the duty to help complete the written report and verify the accuracy of descriptions and circumstances. For exceptional circumstances when it is impossible to make a report immediately after the match, a written report shall be forwarded to the CVPA(s) and the referee administrator by e-mail within 24 hours.
10. For the protection of both the children and the volunteer, AYSO and Region 73 strongly recommend that no volunteer permit himself or herself to be alone with any child or group of children (except his or her own) during AYSO-sponsored activities.

### ***CONDUCT***

1. Region 73 advocates and expects exemplary behavior by all its participants, and it will hold a strict line on conduct as laid out in these policies, regardless of whether misconduct is committed by coaches, referees, players, siblings, parents, or spectators.
2. Demeaning verbalizations are not permitted, especially those abusive statements that deal with race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender, age, or sex.
3. In addition to verbal abuse, physical, emotional, sexual, and ethical abuses are prohibited, as is neglect of a child. Examples of potentially abusive behaviors include but are not limited to striking, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, shaking, biting, yelling, threatening, insulting, mocking, demeaning, indecent gesturing, wanton gesticulation, ogling, suggestive posturing, inappropriate touching, lewd remarks, indecent exposure, unwanted physical contact, suggestions to cheat or to harm another, or unreasonable pressure to play when sick or injured.
4. Some forms of touching are acceptable as long as they are respectful and appropriate:
  - Touching should be in response to the need of the child, not the need of the adult.
  - Touching should be with the child’s permission.
  - Resistance to touching must be respected.
  - Touching should never include the breast, buttocks, or groin.
  - Touching should be done in the open, not in private.
  - Touching should have a brief, limited duration.
  - Touching is age and developmentally dependent; what’s appropriate changes over time.