



Below is our American Sokol SafeSport Protocol which is in effect as of July 28, 2019. While our protocol is mainly to protect our minor students, American Sokol is concerned about all our members whether they are minors or adults.

- Everyone needs to be aware of this protocol and what is required.
- Unit/District Presidents and Physical Directors need to be sure all instructors and volunteers covered under our protocol receives this training in a timely manner and information (certification and misconduct allegations) is reported to RiskMgmt@american-sokol.org.
- Any questions or concerns should be addressed to RiskMgmt@american-sokol.org.



AMERICAN SOKOL SAFESPORT PROTOCOL

Purpose

American Sokol is committed to creating and maintaining a community where persons of all ages who participate in our sports and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of all forms of emotional, physical, and sexual misconduct.

Protocol

- 1) All instructors and volunteers who interact with minors in an ongoing capacity for their Unit, District or American Sokol must take the SafeSport training by July 28, 2020 to ensure that safety protocols are in place. Beginning in 2021, the annual deadline will be December 31. Failure to comply with this directive will result in:
 - a. **Unit Members will not be eligible to participate in any Slet events that involve minors (this includes any competitions, coaching, chaperoning, etc.), and**
 - b. **Unit will not be eligible to apply for American Sokol Grants as they will be considered to be not in compliance.**
- 2) American Sokol must be informed when this training is completed. If this training has already been completed, the National Office of American Sokol must be informed of name of participant and date of completion. To fulfill this requirement the person's name, date of completion, and copy of SafeSport certificate must be sent to RiskMgmt@american-sokol.org; a copy of this information will also be filed in the National Office. (See #4 in the next section for the reimbursement process).
- 3) All units/members/volunteers/employees to report all known or suspected child sexual abuse to local law enforcement first, then US Center for SafeSport, and our National Office. If an allegation reported to the US Center for SafeSport involves child abuse or neglect, they will also comply with all federal or state reporting requirements.
- 4) No one should investigate suspicions or allegations of child abuse or neglect, nor attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of allegations as a condition of reporting to the appropriate law enforcement. For state-by-state reporting information, visit <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/reporting/>.
- 5) American Sokol requires all forms of non-sexual misconduct and SafeSport Policy Violations to be reported to our National Office, RiskMgmt@american-sokol.org.
- 6) The American Sokol encourages all parents to take the parent course and that athletes take advantage of the athlete training resources available. These show what both groups should be looking out for. There is no cost for these from SafeSport org.

How/Where to Take This Training

- 1) Any Unit which is a USAG club member or any coach who is a USAG professional member is mandated to take SafeSport training. Training may be completed through the USAG website so they have documentation of this certification.
- 2) AAU does not offer SafeSport Training through their website. AAU members and anyone else can take this training through www.Safesport.org/training. Cost of this 90-minute training is \$20 per person whether through USAG or SafeSport. You can download the SafeSport Training certificate after successful completion.
- 3) To assist individuals who are required to take SafeSport training, whether or not they are members of USAG, American Sokol has obtained a grant through our Foundation to help cover these expenses.
- 4) The process for Units to obtain reimbursement for the SafeSport Training is:
 - a. Only Units can request reimbursement for their members or others who interact with youth participants in an ongoing basis in their unit.
 - b. Units will need to supply us with names of those taking this certification as well as a copy of their certificate of completion. The units are responsible for vetting the people they are submitting for reimbursement to make sure they have successfully completed this training and have a valid certificate. For those individuals who have already successfully completed this training, Units may also submit their information for reimbursement.
 - c. This information will need to be turned in to RiskMgmt@american-sokol.org by the 20th of August, October and December, 2019. If the money runs out before the end of the year a notice will be sent out that we can accept no more names for reimbursement at this time.
 - d. The Risk Management Committee is responsible for tracking compliance and reporting data to the American Sokol Foundation Committee and the American Sokol Executive Board.

FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES TO THE UNITS

The following are some areas covered under the SafeSport policy

- 1) Sexual Misconduct/Abuse
 - a. Child sexual abuse includes sexual contact with a child
 - i. that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force
 - ii. regardless of the age of the participants
 - iii. all sexual interactions between an adult and a child, regardless of whether there is deception or the child understands the sexual nature of the activity
 - iv. child sexual abuse involves any sexual activity with a child whether consent is not or cannot be given
- 2) Sexually abusive acts may include non-contact sexual acts such as
 - a. verbal acts
 - b. sexually suggestive electronic or written communications
 - c. exposure or voyeurism
- 3) Peer to Peer Child Sexual Abuse
 - a. Sexual contact between minors also can be abusive. Approximately 1/3 of all child sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children and the obligation to report extends to peer-to-peer child sexual abuse
 - b. Whether or not a sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance of power and/or intellectual capabilities
- 4) Non-sexual Abuse
 - a. Misconduct
 - i. emotional (verbal, physical, intimidation acts that deny attention and support)
 - ii. bullying
 - iii. harassment
 - iv. hazing
 - v. all considered misconduct regardless of intent

Helpful Tips for Instructors/Volunteers

- 1) General
 - a. Avoid being alone with a minor in a private setting
 - b. Always have another adult within ear/sight range/view
 - c. Avoid social settings outside of the class environment
- 2) Travel
 - a. Avoid unrelated adults being alone with minor
 - b. Always arrange hotel rooms with age-appropriate, same gender teammates
 - c. Do not drive alone a minor student home or to meets/events
- 3) Social Media
 - a. Always communicate openly and publicly with parent's permission *(copy to parents)
 - b. Never communicate out-of-program with students
- 4) Photography/Videography
 - a. Always in public view
 - b. Edit or delete inappropriate, suggestive or provocative poses

- c. Always secure parent's written consent before
- 5) Massage/Icing/Taping
 - a. All physical contact must be in a public/open location with more than the adult and student present
 - b. Intimate areas are off limits unless by a medical professional with more than one adult present
 - c. Never lay or sit on top of gymnasts
 - d. Never face gymnasts while they are in a static straddle position
 - e. No Lap sitting
 - f. Never pat on the bottom
- 6) Exception
 - a. Physical contact that is reasonably intended to coach, teach or demonstrate a skill or prevent or lessen injury is permissible. Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact, particularly contact that arises out of an error or a misjudgment on the part of the gymnast, participant or coach does not violate this policy.

Where to Make a Report

- 1) Local Authorities
 - a. Child Abuse
 - b. Sexual Abuse or criminal activities involving a minor
- 2) U.S. Center for SafeSport
 - a. Child Abuse
 - b. Any sexual misconduct
 - c. Sex or other criminal charges involving a minor
- 3) American Sokol Office
 - a. Non-sexual misconduct
 - b. SafeSport Policy Violations

Even if you adopt the recommended SafeSport policies, there is still a risk that our members will think the rules don't apply to them.

- How can we protect against members skirting the rules?
 - a. Inform the parents of your policies through manuals, handouts, etc.
 - b. Train your instructors and stress the rules
 - c. When all else fails, have documents signed and in your files!*
 - d. This will show you did your due diligence to deter inappropriate action

Insurance Coverage

- Sokol's risk of liability is lessened through hiring practices following USAG or SafeSport guidelines – shows no negligence
 - a. The purpose of insurance is to reduce exposure to the effects of particular risks despite all your efforts
 - b. Proper coverage would defend against potential lawsuits filed on a negligent hiring theory.
 - c. It should also pay for any damages, should they be awarded
 - d. Ask your insurer, in writing, if you have coverage to defend such lawsuits

*Sample Document

Notice and Transportation Disclaimer

Sokol _____ management understands that parents are not always able to be everywhere for their children. This may cause them to expect the assistance of the unit to provide transportation. If group travel is anticipated, the unit will always request a permission slip and waiver for their child to travel with Sokol. The absence of such a request is a sign that the unit does not take responsibility for the child's transportation.

It is the official policy of this Sokol Unit to discourage, advise against, and not endorse any representative of a Sokol Unit transporting youth to competitions, classes or any other events. Please understand that transportation is NOT a part of our insured responsibilities, and although we cover the activities which are anticipated within our programs, we do not cover instructors transporting their competitors or program participant.

If such activity takes place, parents are hereby put on notice that it is outside the responsibility and approval of Sokol _____.

If, despite our policy, parents request the Unit, or a representative thereof, provide transportation for their children, the parents take full responsibility for that decision and should make their own agreement about that choice with the designated individual. This is your notice that Sokol does NOT take the responsibility for this action.

Sokol _____

Parent, print name _____

Signed by

Parent Signature _____