

BSRA SafeSport Policy

Introduction:

The Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association is committed to improving the safety and development of all the athletes and participants involved in rowing. Sport encourages a healthy lifestyle, builds self-confidence, and helps improve athletes' performance in other arenas as well. They learn goal-setting, teamwork and time management skills. Athletes are less likely to use cigarettes, drugs and alcohol; they have higher graduation rates and are more likely to attend college. Unfortunately, sport can also be a high-risk environment for misconduct, including child physical and sexual abuse. Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association joins USRowing and the United States Olympic Committee in establishing policies to eliminate the misconduct in rowing.

Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association hopes to strengthen participation in the sport and to create a positive environment for the achievement of athletic excellence. This Policy applies to Staff members and volunteers, BSRA athletes and participants; and Parents of BSRA athletes and participants. This Participant Safety Handbook specifically targets six types of misconduct:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotional Misconduct
- Physical Misconduct
- Sexual Misconduct, including Child Sexual Abuse

Definitions:

Athlete: Any student participant in the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association, who regularly attends team practices, regattas, and other organized activities.

Board Member: any individual duly elected to the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association Board of Directors to aid the administration of the organization. The Board is responsible for authorizing any appropriate action to be taken in response to allegations of misconduct. Board Members are also Volunteers.

Chaperone: Any adult volunteer who agrees to accompany the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association athletes on team travel that requires an out-of-town, overnight stay.

VP of Rowing: Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association Board Member chosen to receive complaints, concerns, and reports of misconduct. The VP of Rowing is charged with the unbiased evaluation of alleged misconduct. Where appropriate, the VP of Rowing will report any findings of alleged misconduct to the Board of Directors as well as make recommendations of appropriate responses.

Staff Member or Employee: Any individual directly paid by the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association or its contractors on an on-going basis to provide services to the organization and participating athletes.

Volunteer: Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association is a volunteer-run organization. Volunteers include parents and other adults who assist athletes and the organization at team activities, including, but not limited to, regattas, practices, travel, and other team events.

Athlete Protection Policy:

In the event that any staff member or volunteer observes instances of prohibited conduct, suspected physical or sexual abuse, or misconduct, it is his or her personal responsibility to immediately report his or her observations to the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association VP of Rowing. Staff members and volunteers should not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse allegations as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities. It is a violation of this policy if a staff member and/or volunteer knows of misconduct, but takes no action to intervene for: any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is nonconsensual or forced, coerced or manipulated, or perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner; any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority; any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law.

Prohibited Conduct:

Any engagement in the following activities is strictly prohibited:

- **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), including any conduct described as bullying under federal or state law. Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion.
- **Harassment:** A repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that (a) are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance, (b) offend or degrade, (c) create a hostile environment or (d) 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, including any conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.
- **Hazing:** Coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for (a) joining a group or (b) being socially accepted by a group's members, including any conduct described as hazing under federal or state law. Conduct that meets the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of an athlete's cooperation or willingness to participate. Hazing does not include group or team activities that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors or (b) promote team cohesion.

- **Emotional Misconduct:** Deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete, including any conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law. Emotional misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline or improving athletic performance.
- **Physical Misconduct:** Contact or non-contact conduct that results in physical harm to an athlete or other sport participants, including any conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law. Physical misconduct does not include professionally accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athlete performance.

Sexual Misconduct:

Note: An imbalance of power is always assumed between a coach and an athlete.

Child Sexual Abuse:

Any sexual activity with a child where consent is not or cannot be given. This includes sexual contact with a child that is accomplished by deception, manipulation, force or threat of force, regardless of the age of the participants, and 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. This also includes any act or conduct described as sexual abuse under federal or state law.

Staff/Applicant Screening:

Staff members must pass a formal screening process before performing services for Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association. Elements of our screening process include, as applicable, successful completion of an application, interview, reference check and criminal background check that complies with the Fair Credit Reporting Act. To deter applicants who may be at risk of abusing athletes or participants from applying for positions, Brighton Rowing Club educates its applicants about its protection policies.

Each applicant has the affirmative duty to disclose his or her criminal history. Failing to disclose or intentionally misrepresenting criminal history is grounds for disqualification or dismissal, regardless of when the offense is discovered. Any applicant who has been banned by another sport organization, as temporarily or permanently ineligible, must self-disclose this information. A failure to do so is grounds for disqualification or dismissal.

Information that could disqualify an applicant includes, but is not limited to, arrests, pleas of no contest and criminal convictions—especially if the underlying criminal behavior involved sex or violence. No determination will be based solely on a pending court case, unless the case results in conviction.

Supervision of Athletes and Participants:

During training and competition, Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association strives to create a safe training environment and to protect athletes and participants. Rowing is a team sport and most activities, including training, travel and competition, are group endeavors involving multiple coaches, volunteers, and athletes. The Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association encourages group participation in all activities. However, at times one-on-one interactions are useful and appropriate.

Appropriate one-on-one interactions:

Individual Meetings: an individual meeting may be necessary to address an athlete's concerns, training program, or competition schedule. Any individual meeting should occur when others are present and in a publicly visible and open area. If an individual meeting is to take place in an office, the door should remain unlocked and open.

Individual Training Sessions: an individual training session with an athlete or participant may also be desired or necessary. Permission of a minor athlete's parents or guardians is required in advance of the individual training session(s).

Physical contact with athletes:

Appropriate physical contact between athletes and coaches, staff members, or volunteers is a productive and inevitable part of sport. Athletes are more likely to acquire advanced physical skills and enjoy their sport participation through appropriate physical contact. The safety of our athletes is paramount and when making the athletic space safer through appropriate contact, we follow these general principles:

- the physical contact takes place in public
- there is no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact
- the physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete
- spotting an athlete so that they will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment
- positioning an athlete's body so that he or she may more quickly acquire an athletic skill
- moving an athlete out of harm's way

Travel:

Travel is a standard component of our competitive season and the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association has established policies to guide our travel, minimize one-on-one interactions and reduce the risk of misconduct. Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase athlete safety and improve the competitive experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience.

Local travel occurs when the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association does not sponsor, coordinate, or arrange for travel. For local travel, athletes or their parents/guardians are responsible for making travel arrangements. For local travel, it is the responsibility of the athletes and their parents/guardians to ensure their own travel safety.

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association sponsors, coordinates or arranges for travel so that our team can compete locally, regionally, and nationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers and chaperones will

travel with the athletes. The Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association makes every effort to provide adequate supervision through coaches and other adult chaperones.

Coach and Chaperone travel responsibilities:

When not practicing, training, competing, or preparing for competition, coaches and chaperones will:

- prepare athletes for team travel and make athletes aware of all expectations
- familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before the travel date
- help athletes be on time for all team commitments
- assist with team travel logistical needs
- ensure athletes are complying with the BSRA Code of Conduct
- ensure that athletes are not alone in a hotel room with any adult apart from a family member
- contact parents directly in the event that any safety concerns or misconduct arise

Responding to abuse, misconduct and policy violations:

Every Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association staff member and/or volunteer must report:

- violations of participant safety policies and procedures
- misconduct as defined in Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association's Athlete Protection Policy, and
- suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse.

Credible allegations of child physical or sexual abuse will be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities and/or Child Protective Services. Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association does not investigate suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations as a condition for reporting to the appropriate law enforcement authorities. An independent investigation can harm youth and/or interfere with the legal investigative process.

Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association will address internally any alleged policy violations that are not reportable under state or federal law.

To Whom to Report:

Staff members, volunteers, and athletes may report to any Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association Board Member with whom they are comfortable sharing their concerns. Reports should also be made to the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association VP of Rowing. A staff member and/or volunteer may, and in some cases must, report allegations of child physical or sexual abuse to relevant law enforcement authorities.

How to Report:

Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association will take a report in the way that is most comfortable for the person initiating a report, including anonymous, in-person, verbal or written reports. Regardless of how the report is made, it is helpful to for individuals to provide the name of the

complainant(s), the type of misconduct alleged, and the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct.

Anonymous Reporting:

Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association recognizes it can be difficult for an athlete, teammate, friend or family member to report an allegation of misconduct and strives to remove as many barriers to reporting as possible. Anonymous reports are also permissible. However, anonymous reporting may make it difficult for the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association to properly address allegations. All suspicions of child physical or sexual abuse will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Confidentiality:

To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association will keep confidential the complainant's name on request, the names of potential victims, the accused perpetrator, or the people who made a report of child physical and sexual abuse to the authorities.

Whistleblower Protection:

Regardless of outcome, Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association will not encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, allow or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions against a complainant will be considered violations of our Participant Policies and are grounds for disciplinary action.

Bad-Faith Allegations:

Reports of abuse, misconduct or policy violations that are malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith are prohibited. Such reports will be considered violations of our Participant Safety Handbook and grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the allegation, a person making a malicious, frivolous or bad-faith report may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings.

Notification:

Following a credible allegation that results in the removal of an employee, coach or other volunteer, Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association may consider the circumstances in which it will notify other parents of athletes with whom the accused individual may have had contact. At Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association's discretion, staff members, volunteers, parents, and/or athletes may also be notified of any allegation of child physical or sexual abuse or other misconduct that law enforcement authorities are actively investigating.

Disciplinary rules and procedures:

While the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association endeavors to provide support and guidance to participants on a day-to-day basis, it is vital to utilize formal procedures for disciplinary action. This Policy is used to address allegations misconduct and violations of the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association's Athlete Protection Policy against staff members, athletes, and/or volunteers.

Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association recognizes that there are varying levels of misconduct. In enforcing disciplinary procedures, Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association will make every effort to apply the procedures proportionately, reasonably, fairly, and equally.

On receipt of an allegation, Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association will determine appropriate steps to address the conduct based on several factors, including the age of the complainant or victim, the age of the accused, and the nature, scope, and extent of the allegations. If the accused individual is a minor, Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association will contact his or her parents or guardians, in addition to contacting the law enforcement as appropriate.

Sanctions for violations of the Participant Safety Handbook will be proportionate and reasonable under the circumstances. The Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association will address allegations against a staff member under its Employment Policies and Procedures. In addition to day-to-day guidance, the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association may take such disciplinary actions as:

- Immediate Suspension or Termination
- Inform the individual's supervisor or, in the case of a youth participant, the youth's parent or guardian;
- Provide the individual with guidance, redirection and instruction;
- Temporarily suspend the individual;
- Issue a verbal warning;
- Issue a written warning
- Suspend or terminate employment or membership

Appeals of disciplinary action may be made directly to the Buffalo Scholastic Rowing Association's Board of Directors and/or VP of Rowing for reconsideration.