

Baseball For All



Safety Policies and Procedures

Introduction

Baseball For All is a national nonprofit providing opportunities for girls, ages 6-18, to play, coach, and lead in baseball. In response to the formalization of Senate Bill 534 (2017), and with the support of U.S. Center for Safe Sport, Baseball For All is implementing the following policies for the prevention and administration of instances of sexual abuse and violent crimes within our sport, nationwide. This handbook is adopted from USA Baseball’s BASE Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies. Baseball For All enforces a zero-tolerance policy. Any individual who has been suspected or convicted of any crimes sexual or violent in nature will have no engagement with Baseball For All.

Working Definition: PROGRAM is used throughout this document and refers to all Baseball For All teams and organizations who participate in Baseball For All activities.

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BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENTS & REPORTING POLICIES

PROGRAM is required to conduct background checks on managers, coaches, board of directors' members and any other persons, volunteers or hired workers, who provide regular services to the program and/or have repetitive access to or contact with players.

The Background check will be conducted through USA Baseball's site at USABDevelops.org.

The background check will search the National Criminal Database, as well as the National Sex Offender Registry, including all 50 states, U.S. territories, and American Indian tribe registries.

Baseball For All and the PROGRAM must have documentation of successful background check. Criminal background checks will be conducted on at least an annual basis or as otherwise required by law.

Baseball For All enforces a zero-tolerance policy. Any individual who has been suspected or convicted of any crimes sexual or violent in nature will have no engagement with Baseball For All.

If, during the course of coaching or volunteering with the PROGRAM is accused, arrested, indicted or convicted of a criminal offense against a child, it is the duty and responsibility of the PROGRAM to notify Baseball For All. The PROGRAM must also notify Baseball For All report of any individual they have banned or suspended for any reason PROGRAM must communicate that it enforces a zero-tolerance policy.

Individuals are banned or suspended based on being accused, indicted, arrested or convicted of any crimes sexual or violent in nature. Baseball For All will report to USA Baseball coaches and volunteers who are banned or suspended from PROGRAM as well as their own internal staff.

EDUCATION & TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

As required by federal law, all coaches and volunteers with direct contact to athletes will complete the “Abuse Awareness for Adults” online course. Course can be found on the USA Baseball Development USABDevelops.com website. Proof of completion of the courses will be sent to Baseball For All by USA Baseball.

The Abuse Awareness for Adults course is hosted by former Major Leaguer, David Ross. The Course provides resources to create a positive and safe environment for all athletes, coaches, parents, umpires, and spectators by understanding how to recognize misconduct and abuse of all types. Topics covered include how to identify and report incidents and what abuse awareness policies should be in place.

BEING A BASEBALL FOR ALL COACH

To coach for Baseball For All, coaches must pass a background check, complete their SafeSport courses, register online at BaseballForAll.com, and agree to the BFA Coach Pledge.

The Baseball For All Coach Pledge

A pledge inspired by real conversations with young girls in our program.

I will treat her as a baseball player.

I will honor her love of baseball by giving her playing time.

I will provide opportunities for her to play positions she's interested in.

I will cultivate a positive team environment.

I will respect each girl's opinions, lifestyle, and preferences.

I will demonstrate good sportsmanship towards opponents and umpires.

I will provide constructive coaching without yelling at, intimidating, or humiliating my players.

I will ensure parents treat players with the utmost respect without coaching or arguing from the stands.

I will compete knowing that win or lose, how I made her feel is what she'll remember most.

I will believe in her.

I will empower her.

I will help her find her strengths.

I will challenge her to be her best.

And above all else, I will dare her to follow her dreams.

COMMUNICATION & MESSAGING REQUIREMENTS

Electronic Communication Policy

As part of Baseball For All emphasis on minor athlete safety, all electronic communications between minor athletes and staff members, or other adults who have regular contact with minor athletes, must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. This policy applies to all staff members and other adults who have regular contact with minor athletes.

Content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the minor athlete's family. If the athlete is under the age of 18, any electronic text, social media or similar communication must copy or include the minor athlete's parent or legal guardian.

Social Media

Coaches may not have athletes join a personal social media page. Athletes and parents can friend the official PROGRAM page and coaches can communicate to athletes through the site. All posts, messages, text, or media of any kind between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team- oriented motivational purposes.

Coaches are not permitted to maintain social media connections with minor athletes. Coaches are not permitted to accept any new personal page requests on social media platforms who are minors.

Email

Coaches and athletes may use email to communicate. All email content between Coach and Athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Where the coach is a staff member and/or volunteer, email from a coach to any athlete should come for the club website email. Another, coach, staff member, volunteer, and/or a parent or legal guardian must be copied when communicating with an athlete through email.

Texting

Texting is allowed between coaches and athletes. All texts between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. Text messages cannot be sent to one individual minor athlete; the text must go to entire team or have an additional coach, staff member, volunteer included.

Request to Discontinue All Electronic Communications

The parents/legal guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted through any form of electronic communication by coach, staff member, or volunteer.

Electronic Imagery

From time to time, digital photos, videos of practice or competition, and other publicly obtainable image of the athlete – individually or in groups – may be taken. These photos and/or videos may be submitted to local, state or national publications, used in club videos, posted on team or team associated websites, or team social media. It is the default guideline of the Baseball For All to allow such practices as long as the athlete or athletes are in public view and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the athlete and the PROGRAM. If the parent or legal guardian would prefer photos of their child not to be shared, this request should be submitted in writing to the PROGRAM and Baseball For All.

MINOR ATHLETE SAFETY POLICIES

Athlete-Coach Interaction

Athletes must not be left unattended or unsupervised during events. When one-on-one interactions are necessary, they must be closely monitored.

Monitoring Athletes

Adults are prohibited from being alone with an individual athlete in any room, facility, or vehicle. Interactions between adults and athletes must be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult. Exceptions can be made if it's an emergency or the adult has obtained written permission from the minor athlete's parent/legal guardian.

Individual Training Session

An individual training session(s) with a minor athlete may be desired or necessary. In such circumstances, the athlete's training session should be open and observable by others. Additionally, written permission of a minor athlete's parent/legal guardian is required in advance of the individual training session(s). Parents/legal guardians are encouraged to attend the training session.

PROGRAM TRAVEL

Travel is a standard aspect of our programming and Baseball For All has established policies to guide its travel, minimize one-on-one interactions and reduce the risk of misconduct. Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase minor athlete safety and improve the competitive experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience. This policy applies to all staff members and other adults who have regular contact with minor athletes.

We distinguish between travel to training, practice and local competition or events (“local travel”), and team travel involving a coordinated overnight stay to events (“team travel”).

Local Travel

Local travel occurs when a PROGRAM does not sponsor, coordinate, or arrange for travel. For local travel, parents/legal guardians of athletes are responsible for making all travel arrangements. In these instances, it is the responsibility of the parents/legal guardians of the athlete to ensure the person transporting the athlete maintains all safety and legal requirements, including but not limited to: a valid driver’s license, proper insurance, well maintained vehicle, and compliance with all state laws.

In an effort to minimize one-on-one interactions, team staff members, coaches and/or volunteers who are not acting as a parent/legal guardian, should not drive alone with an unrelated athlete and should only drive with at least two other athletes or another adult at all times, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the athlete’s parent/legal guardian in advance of travel. In any case where a staff member and/or volunteer is involved in the athlete’s local travel, a written parent/legal guardian release is required in advance. Efforts must be made to ensure that staff members, and other adults who have regular contact with minors, are not alone with an athlete or participant (e.g., picking up and dropping off the athletes).

Coaches, staff members, and volunteers who are also an athlete’s parent/legal guardian may provide shared transportation for any athlete(s). We encourage parents/legal guardians to pick up their athlete first and drop off their athlete last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement. We also recommend completing a shared travel declaration form signed by the parents/legal guardians of any athlete who is being transported as part of such a carpool arrangement.

Team Travel

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when a PROGRAM sponsors, coordinates, or arranges for travel so that its teams can compete locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. Because of the greater distances, staff members, and other adults who have regular contact with minor athletes, will often travel with the minor athletes. However, no staff member, or other adults who have regular contact with minors, will engage in team travel without the proper safety requirements in place, including: a valid driver’s license, proper insurance, well maintained vehicle, and compliance with all state laws.

PROGRAM make efforts to provide adequate supervision through staff members and other adults who have regular contact with minor athletes. Appropriate adult-to-minor athlete ratios depends on the age of the athletes and other participants. Evaluate each program and discuss this topic with parents/legal guardians of minor athletes to determine supervisory needs.

For team travel, hotels and air travel will be booked in advance by PROGRAM. Minor athletes will share rooms, with 2-4 minor athletes assigned per room depending on accommodations. Team will notify hotel management should any special arrangements be warranted. For instance, Team will ask hotels to block pay-per-view channels and request an additional large room or suite so that its members and minor athletes may socialize as a group. Meetings do not occur in hotel rooms (and may occur in hotel lobbies or other meeting rooms), and separate spaces will be reserved for adults and minor athletes to socialize.

We encourage family members who wish to stay in the team hotel to do so. If family members do not stay in the team hotel, it is encouraged that all minor athletes call parents/legal guardians regularly and will allow for any unscheduled calls by either the minor athlete or parent/legal guardian.

Travel Notification

When possible, PROGRAM will provide reasonable advance notice before team travel. Notice will include the dates, location and duration of competition. Travel notice will also include designated team hotels for overnight stays as well as a contact person within the PROGRAM. This individual will be the point of contact to confirm intention to travel and to help with travel details.

PROGRAM will post specific travel itineraries when they become available. These will include a more detailed, hour-by-hour itinerary, as well as contact information for team travel chaperones.

Mixed-Gender and Mixed-Age Travel

While Baseball For All is traditionally an all-girls program, it is possible teams may at-times be co-ed. Athletes will only share a room with other athletes of the same gender and age group. Athletes will also be grouped by age and gender for the purposes of assigning an appropriate chaperone. PROGRAM will make every effort to provide these groups at least one chaperone of the same gender. However, in instances where PROGRAM rely on parents/legal guardians to serve as chaperones, it may be limited in providing this match.

Regardless of gender, an unrelated staff member, and other adults who have regular contact with minors, shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement alone with a minor athlete (unless the staff member, or other adults who have regular contact with minors, is the parent/legal guardian, or sibling of that particular minor athlete). In the event that rooms are connected, such as a hotel room with adjoining rooms, a lock must be in place from both rooms. Where an adult is registered both as a coach and an athlete, and is functioning primarily as a coach, he or she may share sleeping arrangements with another registered coach.

Travel Responsibilities of Coach and Staff

During team or individual sport travel, staff members, and other adults who have regular contact with minors, will help with adherence to policy guidelines, including without limitation the Travel Policy and Locker Rooms and Changing Areas Policy and Reporting Policy.

If an unrelated staff member, and other adults who have regular contact with minors, transports an athlete in their private car for team or individual sport travel, a copy of the coach's or staff members valid driver's license is required, as is a copy of the parent/legal guardian's signed permission form.

When not practicing, training, competing, or preparing for competition, coaches and staff will monitor the activities of athletes, coaches, staff members, during team travel. Coaches and staff will:

1. Prepare athletes for team or individual sport travel and make athletes aware of all expectations. Supplemental information will be given to parents/legal guardians of minor athletes who are considered inexperienced travelers, new, or relatively new to team travel, or who are under the age of 14
2. Familiarize itself with all travel itineraries and schedules before the initiation of team or individual sport travel
3. Conform to and monitor others' adherence to all policies during team or individual sport travel.

Locker Room and Changing Area

Baseball For All is concerned with locker room activities between minors, minors and adults, adults being alone with individual minors in locker rooms and changing areas, with non-official or non-related adults having unsupervised access to athletes, and with inappropriate behavior among adults in locker room.

Athletes (especially minors) are particularly vulnerable in locker rooms and changing areas due to various stages of dress/undress and because minor athletes are less supervised than at many other times. Minor athlete-to-athlete problems, such as child sexual abuse and bullying, harassment, and hazing, often occur at times when athletes are not monitored. This is especially true in locker rooms. Because athletes are vulnerable in locker rooms and changing areas, it is also important to monitor contact between staff members and other adults who have regular contact with minor athletes. Adherence to a locker room and changing areas policy enhances privacy and reduces the likelihood of misconduct.

The following guidelines are designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. This policy applies to all coaches, staff members and other adults who have regular contact with minor athletes.

Facilities

PROGRAM will provide a description of practice and competition facilities to allow athletes and their families to plan their use. This information will be made available to minor athletes and families prior to any event, trip or season. Sample locker room descriptions, include:

1. No locker room or changing facilities. Athletes will be expected to come dressed for practice and to change and shower at home.
2. A changing area that is shared with the general public. As such, there are likely to be people who are not associated with PROGRAM in the changing area around the time of practice.
3. A changing area and locker room dedicated to our athletes and teams.
4. A changing area and locker room dedicated to our athletes and teams, as well as visiting athletes and teams.
5. When PROGRAM travel for competition, the facilities may differ from location to location. PROGRAM will work with the host team to provide as much information as early as possible regarding the locker room and changing areas and post that information as soon as it's available.
6. Under no circumstances shall an unrelated adult at a facility under PROGRAMS's jurisdiction be undressed (disrobed or partial and/or full nudity where private body parts are exposed) in front of athletes.

Monitoring

In instances where PROGRAM has use of locker rooms and changing areas (e.g., immediately before and following practices and competitions), there will be regular monitoring of locker room areas. While constant monitoring inside of locker rooms and changing areas might be the most effective way to prevent problems, it is understood that this would likely make athletes uncomfortable and may even place PROGRAM coaches, and staff at risk for unwarranted suspicion.

PROGRAM will conduct a sweep of the locker rooms and changing areas before athletes arrive, post staff members directly outside of the locker rooms and changing areas during periods of use, and leave the doors open only when adequate privacy is still possible. PROGRAM will conduct these sweeps, with women checking on female-designated areas, and men checking on male-designated areas. PROGRAM will prohibit hazing, bullying, harassment, and other forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas.

1. Coaches, staff, and volunteers make every effort to recognize when an athlete goes to the locker room or changing area during practice and competition, and will check on the athlete's whereabouts if they do not return in a timely fashion
2. Pursuant to appropriate one-on-one personal interactions, individual meetings with a minor athlete and a staff member, or other adults who have regular contact with minors, in a locker room, PROGRAM require that at least one additional adult be with the staff member or other adults who have regular contact with minors. Any responsible adult that monitors and supervises the locker room or changing area must be SafeSport compliant.
3. Parents/legal guardians who are not part of PROGRAM are restricted from entering locker rooms and changing areas unless it is truly necessary. In those instances, it should only be a same-sex parent/legal guardian. If this is necessary, parents/legal guardians should let PROGRAM coach or staff member know about this prior to entering the locker rooms.
4. If an athlete needs assistance with his or her uniform or gear, or an athlete's disability warrants assistance, then a parent/legal guardian who is not part of PROGRAM staff must inform an organization staff member beforehand that the parent/legal guardian will be helping the athlete.

Mixed-Gender Teams

When teams consist of both male and female athletes, both female and male privacy rights must be given consideration and appropriate arrangements made. Where possible, PROGRAM will have the male and female athletes dress/undress in separate locker rooms and then convene in a single dressing room before the game or team meeting. If not, athletes can use the locker room in gender-based shifts (i.e., girls first and when they are done the boys can change).

Athletes Who Are Transgender

Athletes who are transgender have the right to participate in sporting competition. When an athlete discloses their gender identity, PROGRAM will ask individuals which changing facility they would prefer to use, if/when a private facility is not available. PROGRAM does not tolerate bullying, hazing, sexual misconduct, harassment, or sexual harassment of any athlete based on gender identity.

Recording Devices

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras, increase the risk for different forms of misconduct in locker rooms and changing areas. As a result, there will be no use of a device's recording capabilities in the locking rooms or changing areas.