

# GDRA ATHLETE SAFETY POLICY

Original: Jan 1, 2015  
Version 01: August 2016

## I. Requirement

The Greater Dayton Rowing Association (hereinafter "GDRA") shall be guided by the principle that supporting the health and safety of its athletes is a key element of its programs.

## II. Applicability

This policy applies to all persons officially associated with GDRA's Youth Program. Specifically, but not limited to:

1. Youth athletes (hereafter "athletes")
2. Coaches
3. Chaperoning parents
4. Any other person who GDRA authorizes, approves or appoints to a position of authority over, and to have frequent contact with Athletes.

Criminal background screening, and education and training are mandatory for those individuals GDRA formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, or (b) to have frequent contact with athletes. As of the initial implementation of this GDRA Athlete Safety Policy on Jan 1, 2015, those individuals consist solely of coaches in the GDRA Youth Program.

## III. POLICY

### 1. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Staff members and/or volunteers are required to report abuse, misconduct, and violations of the Athlete Safety Policy. To do so, staff members and volunteers should have a basic understanding of sexual abusers, as well as "grooming," the most common strategy offenders use to seduce their victims. Using a combination of attention, affection and gifts, offenders select a child, win the child's trust (and the trust of the child's parent or guardian), manipulate the child into sexual activity, and keep the child from disclosing abuse.

Accordingly, staff members and volunteers must complete awareness training concerning misconduct in sport before performing services for GDRA. Misconduct in sport includes:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Hazing
- Emotion misconduct
- Physical misconduct, and
- Sexual misconduct, including child sexual abuse

GDRA shall **require** education and training concerning the Athlete Safety Policy for those individuals it formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, or (b) to have frequent contact with athletes to be the following:

#### **Athlete Safety Policy**

Annually sign, and provide to the Director of Youth Rowing, a "Confirmation of Policy Compliance" stating that they have read and understand the SafeSport policy. The Compliance Document is attached as Appendix A.

GDRA has made the Athlete Safety Policy easily available to everyone by including a link on its' web site.

### **SafeSport Training**

Annually obtain, and provide to the Director of Youth Rowing, a “SafeSport Certificate of Completion” by completing the online training course at:

<http://www.usrowing.org/safesport/> (Education and Training)

This training course takes about 1 hour to complete and the certificate is automatically generated upon successful completing of the course.

GDRA ***strongly recommends*** that all Trustees, Parents, and Youth Athletes familiarize themselves with the Athlete Safety Policy and complete the on line training.

## **2. PROHIBITED CONDUCT**

### **Emotional Misconduct**

(1) A pattern of deliberate, non-contact behavior that has the potential to cause emotional or psychological harm to an athlete. Non-contact behaviors include:

- a. verbal acts
- b. physical acts
- c. acts that deny attention or support

(2) Any act or conduct described as emotional abuse or misconduct under federal or state law.

#### **Exception**

Emotional misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, discipline or improving athletic performance.

#### **Examples**

Examples of emotional misconduct prohibited by this policy include, without limitation:

- (1) Verbal Acts. A pattern of verbal behaviors that (a) attack an athlete personally (e.g., calling them fat, worthless or disgusting) or (b) repeatedly and excessively yelling at a particular participant or participants in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose.
- (2) Physical Acts. A pattern of physically aggressive behaviors, such as (a) throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at, or in the presence of, participants; or (b) punching walls, windows or other objects.
- (3) Acts that Deny Attention and Support. A pattern of (a) ignoring an athlete for extended periods of time or (b) routinely or arbitrarily excluding participants from practice.

Note: Bullying, harassment and hazing, defined below, often involve some form of emotional misconduct.

### **Physical Misconduct**

(1) Contact or non-contact with results in, or reasonably threaten to, cause physical harm to an athlete or other sport participants; or

(2) Any act or conduct described as physical abuse or misconduct under federal or state law.

#### **Exceptions**

Physical misconduct does not include professionally-accepted coaching methods of skill enhancement, physical conditioning, team building, appropriate discipline or improving athlete performance. For example, hitting, punching and kicking are well-regulated forms of contact in combat sports, but have no place in rowing.

#### **Examples**

Examples of physical misconduct prohibited by this policy include, without limitation:

(1) Contact offenses. Behaviors that include:

- (a) punching, beating, biting, striking, choking or slapping an athlete;
- (b) intentionally hitting an athlete with objects or sporting equipment;
- (c) providing alcohol to an athlete under the legal drinking age (under U.S. law, regardless of location of distribution);
- (d) providing illegal drugs or non-prescribed medications to any athlete;
- (e) encouraging or permitting an athlete to return to play pre-maturely following a serious injury (e.g., a concussion) and without the clearance of a medical professional;
- (f) prescribing dieting or other weight-control methods without regard for the nutritional well-being and health of athlete.

(2) Non-contact offenses. Behaviors that include:

- (a) isolating an athlete in a confined space (e.g., locking an athlete in a small space);

- (b) forcing an athlete to assume a painful stance or position for no athletic purpose (e.g. requiring an athlete to kneel on a harmful surface);
- (c) withholding, recommending against or denying adequate hydration, nutrition, medical attention or sleep.

Note: Bullying, harassment and hazing, defined below, often involve some form of physical misconduct.

### **Bullying**

- (1) 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
- (2) Any act or conduct described as bullying under federal or state law

#### **Exceptions**

Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion. For example, bullying does not include verbal admonitions to encourage team members to train harder and to push through a difficult training regimen.

#### **Examples**

Examples of bullying prohibited by this policy include, without limitation:

- (1) Physical behaviors. Behaviors that include:
  - (a) hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping an athlete;
  - (b) throwing at, or hitting an athlete with, objects such as sporting equipment.
- (2) Verbal and emotional behaviors. Behaviors that include:
  - (a) teasing, ridiculing, intimidating;
  - (b) spreading rumors or making false statements; or
  - (c) using electronic communications, social media or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate ("cyber bullying").

### **Harassment**

- (1) 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; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law

#### **Exceptions**

None

#### **Examples**

Examples of harassment prohibited by this policy include, without limitation:

- (1) Physical offenses. Behaviors that include:
  - (a) hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping an athlete or participant;
  - (b) throwing at or hitting an athlete with objects including sporting equipment.
- (2) Non-physical offenses. Behaviors that include:
  - (a) making negative or disparaging comments about an athlete's sexual orientation, gender expression, gender, disability, religion, race, skin color, national origin or ethnic traits;
  - (b) displaying offensive materials, gestures and symbols;
  - (c) withholding or reducing competition/practice time to an athlete based on his or her sexual orientation.

### **Hazing**

- (1) 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; or
- (2) Any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law

#### **Exception**

Hazing does not include group or team activities that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors or (b) promote team cohesion

#### **Examples**

Examples of hazing prohibited by this policy include, without limitation:

- (1) requiring, forcing or otherwise requiring the consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs
- (2) tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining an athlete

- (3) sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature
- (4) sleep deprivation, otherwise unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food
- (5) social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule
- (6) beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault
- (7) excessive training requirements focused on individuals on a team

Note – Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of an athlete’s willingness to cooperate or participate.

**Sexual Misconduct**

- (1) Any touching or non-touching sexual interaction that is (a) nonconsensual or forced, (b) coerced or manipulated, or (c) perpetrated in an aggressive, harassing, exploitative or threatening manner;
- (2) Any sexual interaction between an athlete and an individual with evaluative, direct or indirect authority. Such relationships involve an imbalance of power and are likely to impair judgment or be exploitative; or
- (3) Any act or conduct described as sexual abuse or misconduct under federal or state law (e.g. sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, rape).

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

Types of sexual misconduct include:

- (1) sexual assault,
- (2) sexual harassment,
- (3) sexual abuse, or
- (4) any other sexual intimacies that exploit an athlete. Minors cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult, and all sexual interaction between an adult and a minor is strictly prohibited.

**Exceptions**

None

**Examples**

Examples of sexual misconduct prohibited under this policy include, without limitation:

(1) Touching offenses. Behaviors that include:

- (a) fondling an athlete's breasts or buttocks
- (b) exchange of reward in sport (e.g., team placement, scores, feedback) for sexual favors
- (c) genital contact
- (d) sexual relations or intimacies between persons in a position of trust, authority and/or evaluative and supervisory control over athletes or other sport participants.

Comments

(1) Authority and Trust. Once the unique coach-athlete relationship is established, the authority and trust on the part of the coach over the athlete shall be assumed, regardless of age. Accordingly, sexual interaction or intimacies between a coach and an athlete or other participant are prohibited, regardless of age, both during coaching and during that period following coaching if an imbalance in power could jeopardize effective decision-making.

(2) Imbalance of Power. Factors relevant to determining whether there is an imbalance of power include, but are not limited to: (a) the nature and extent of the coach's supervisory, evaluative or other authority over the athlete being coached; (b) the actual relationship between parties; (c) the parties' respective roles; (d) the nature and duration of the sexual relations or intimacies; (e) the age of the coach; (f) the age of the athlete or participant; (g) and whether the coach has engaged in a pattern of sexual interaction with other athletes or participants.

(3) Exception. This section does not apply to a pre-existing relationship between two spouses or life partners.

(2) Non-touching offenses. Behaviors that include:

- (a) a coach discussing his or her sex life with an athlete
- (b) a coach asking an athlete about his or her sex life
- (c) a coach requesting or sending a nude or partial-dress photo to athlete
- (d) exposing athletes to pornographic material
- (e) sending athletes sexually explicit or suggestive electronic or written messages or photos (e.g. "sexting")
- (f) deliberately exposing an athlete to sexual acts

- (g) deliberately exposing an athlete to nudity (except situations where locker rooms and changing areas are shared)
- (h) sexual harassment; specifically, the sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, and
  - a. is unwelcome, offensive or creates a hostile environment, and the offending individual knows or is told this
  - b. is sufficiently severe or intense to be harassing to a reasonable person in the context.

**Child Sex Abuse**

(1) 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. Sexual contact between minors also can be abusive. Whether or not 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.

(2) Any act or conduct described as child sexual abuse under federal or state law.

**Exception**

None

**Examples**

Sexually abusive acts may include sexual penetration, sexual touching or non-contact sexual acts such as verbal acts, sexually suggestive electronic or written communications, exposure or voyeurism.

**Comments**

(1) Prohibited misconduct shall include, without limitation:

Romantic or sexual relationships, which began during the sport relationship, between athletes or other participants and those individuals (i) with direct supervisory or evaluative control, or (ii) are in a position of power and trust over the athlete or other participant. Except in circumstances where no imbalance of power exists, coaches have the direct supervisory or evaluative control and are in a position of power and trust over those athletes or participants they coach.

The prohibition on romantic or sexual relationships does not include those relationships where it can be demonstrated that there is no imbalance of power. For example, this prohibition does not apply to a pre-existing relationship between two spouses or life partners. For factors that may be relevant to determining whether an imbalance of power exists, consult the USOC's Athlete Protection Policy.

(2) Member organizations are not required to prohibit misconduct specifically categorized above. For example, a member organization may prohibit sexual harassment as "harassment," "sexual harassment," or under some other category or definition.

**3. CONTACT AND COMMUNICATION WITH ATHLETES AND PARTICIPANTS**

**Appropriate One-to-One Interactions**

During training and competition, Greater Dayton Rowing strives to create two-deep leadership and minimize one-to-one interactions to create a safe training environment and to protect athletes and participants.

(1) Individual Meetings. An individual meeting may be necessary to address an athlete's concerns, training program or competition schedule. Under these circumstance, coaches, staff members and volunteers are to observe the following guidelines.

- (a) any individual meeting should occur when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed.
- (b) Where possible, an individual meeting should take place in a publicly visible and open area, such as a corner of the boathouse or rowing dock.
- (c) If an individual meeting is to take place in an office, the door should remain unlocked and open.
- (d) If a closed-door meeting is necessary, the coach, staff member and/or volunteer must inform another coach, staff member and/or volunteer and ensure the door remains unlocked.

(2) Individual Training Sessions. An individual training session(s) with an athlete or participant may also be desired or necessary. Under these circumstances, written permission of a minor athlete's parents or guardians is required in advance of the individual training session(s), and GDRA encourages parents and guardians to attend the training session.

**Prohibited One-to-One Interactions**

Except as set forth above, minor athletes and participants will not be left unattended or unsupervised during practice session, including being left alone on the water or on shore during water practice session, and coaches, staff members and/or volunteers are prohibited from being alone with an individual athlete or participant in any room or building. Coaches, staff members and/or volunteers will supervise minor athletes until they are picked up at the end of a practice session.

**Exception**

Minor athletes and participants may be placed in one-to-one interactions in a coaching launch during an on-the-water practice session. During this period, the launch should remain in visible and audible contact with crews on-the-water.

**Appropriate Physical Contact with Athletes**

Appropriate physical contact between athletes and coaches, staff members, contractors 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. However, guidelines for appropriate physical contact reduce the potential for misconduct in sport.

(1) Common Criteria for Appropriate Physical Contact. Physical contact with athletes - for safety, consolation and celebration - has multiple criteria in common which make them both safe and appropriate. These include:

- (a) the physical contact takes place in public
- (b) there is no potential for, or actual, physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact
- (c) the physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult

(2) Safety. The safety of our athletes is paramount, and in many instances, we make the athletic space safer through appropriate physical contact. Examples include:

- (a) spotting an athlete so that they will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment
- (b) 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
- (c) making athletes aware that they might be in harm's way because of other athletes practicing around them or because equipment in use
- (d) releasing muscle cramps

(3) Celebration. Sports are physical by definition, and we recognize participants often express their joy of participation, competition, achievement and victory through physical acts. We encourage these public expressions of celebration, which include:

- (a) greeting gestures such as high-fives, fist bumps, and brief hugs
- (b) congratulatory gestures such as celebratory handshakes, hugs, "jump-arounds" and pats on the back for any form of athletic or personal accomplishment.

(4) Consolation. 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:

- (a) embracing a crying athlete
- (b) putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down ("side hugs")
- (c) lifting a fallen athlete off the ground surface

(5) Prohibited Physical Contact. Prohibited forms of physical contact, which shall be reported immediately under our Reporting Policy include, without limitation:

- (a) asking or having an athlete sit in the lap of a coach, administrator, staff member, volunteer or other athlete
- (b) lingering or repeated embraces of the athletes that go beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact
- (c) slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from an athlete
- (d) "cuddling" or maintaining prolonged physical contact during any aspect of training, travel or overnight stay
- (e) playful, yet inappropriate contact that is not part of regular training (e.g., tickling or "horseplay" wrestling)
- (f) continued physical contact that makes an athlete obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed or not
- (g) any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire for decreased or no physical contact, where such decreased contact is feasible in a competitive training environment.

## **Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy**

As part of our emphasis on athlete safety, all electronic communication between a coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the athlete's family. At the request of the parent or guardian, any e-mail, electronic text, social media, or similar communication will copy or include the athlete's parents or guardians.

- (1) Facebook, Blogs and Similar Sites. Coaches may not have athletes of GDRA's teams join a coach's personal social media page. 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 team-oriented motivational purposes.
- (2) Twitter, Instant Messaging and Similar Media. Coaches and athletes may "follow" each other. Coaches cannot "re-tweet" athlete message posts without permission of the athlete, and vice versa. Coaches and athletes should use best judgment and professionalism in the content of their public media posting. All direct posts and messaging between coach and athlete must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.
- (3) Email and Similar Electronic Communications. Athletes and coaches 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.
- (4) Texting is allowed between coaches and athletes. All texts between coach and athlete must be professional and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.
- (5) Electronic Imagery. From time to time, digital photos, videos of practice or competition, and other publicly obtainable images 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 GDRA videos or publications, posted on GDRA or GDRA associated websites or offered to the GDRA athlete families seasonally in print or electronic form. It is the default policy of GDRA to allow such practices, as long as the athlete or athletes are in public view, no persons are referred to by name and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the athlete and GDRA. When imagery references an individual's name, that individual must be asked for permission to use their name, applicable only to the imagery for which permission is being requested. Imagery must not be contrary to any rules as outlined in this Athlete Safety Policy.

## **Request to Discontinue All Electronic Communications or Imagery**

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by any form of electronic communication by coaches (photography or videography).

- (6) Misconduct. Social media and electronic communications can also be used to commit misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment and hazing). Such communications by coaches, staff, volunteers, administrators, officials, parents or athletes will not be tolerated and re considered violations of our Athlete Safety Policy.

## **TRAVEL**

Travel is a standard aspect of our competitive season. We distinguish between travel to training, practice and local competition ("local travel"), and team travel involving a coordinated overnight stay ("team travel").

### **Local Travel**

For local travel, athletes or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) are responsible for making all travel arrangements. In these instances it is the responsibility of the athlete or their parents/guardians (for minor athletes) 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, staff members, coaches and/or volunteers, who are not also acting as a parent, 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 or guardian in advance of travel. In any case where a staff member and/or volunteer is involved in the athlete's local travel, a parental release is required in advance. Efforts must be made to ensure that staff and/or volunteers are not alone with an athlete or participant, by, e.g., picking the athletes up in groups.

Coaches, staff members and volunteers who are also an athlete's guardian may provide shared transportation for any athlete(s). We encourage 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/guardians of any minor athlete who is being transported as part of such a carpool arrangement.

#### **Team Travel**

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs so that our teams can compete locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers and chaperones will often travel with the athletes.

#### **Detailed Travel Policy Established by Boosters**

More specific policies for travel arrangements and individual conduct are the responsibility of the parents' Booster organization. GDRA athletes, staff members, coaches and volunteers shall follow those policies as established by the Boosters.

### **4. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND SCREENING**

GDRA shall require criminal background screening for those individuals it formally authorizes, approves or appoints (a) to a position of authority over, or (b) to have frequent contact with athletes. For purposes of clarification, GDRA is considered to formally authorize, approve or appoint an individual in instances where GDRA has control over the appointment process. At the time of the adoption of this policy, such individuals requiring background screening consists solely of coaches of the Youth Program.

#### **NCSI Background Screening**

Background screening through NCSIsafe.com. Greater Dayton Rowing Association - Registration I.D. number: 13204520. Use full legal name, follow all prompts and submit. If any questions, contact NCSI. NCSI will issue results to the applicant and GDRA based on a "Red Light/Green Light" system. A "Green Light" or "meets criteria" finding indicates an individual is suitable for participation in GDRA with regard to the background screening. A "Red Light" finding means the individual "does not meet the criteria".

### **5. REPORTING MISCONDUCT**

It is a violation of this Athlete Safety Policy if a staff member and/or volunteer knows of misconduct, but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the athlete(s), participant(s), staff member and/or volunteer. Every staff member and/or volunteer is obligated under this policy to report violations of this Athlete Safety Policy.

#### **Reporting Procedure**

- (1) To whom to Report. Individual shall report to any Board of Trustees member with whom they are comfortable sharing their concerns. A staff member, volunteer, parent or athlete may, and in many cases must, report any allegation of child physical or sexual abuse to relevant law enforcement authorities.
- (2) How to Report. GDRA will take a report in the way that is most comfortable for the person initiating a report including an anonymous, in-person, verbal or written report. Regardless of how you choose to report, it is helpful to GDRA for individuals to provide, at a minimum:
  - (a) name of the complainant(s)
  - (b) type of misconduct alleged
  - (c) name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct
  - (d) approximate dates the misconduct was committed
  - (e) names of other individuals who might have information regarding the alleged misconduct
  - (f) summary statement of the reasons to believe that misconduct has occurred
- (3) Confidentiality. To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, GDRA will keep confidential the complainant's name on request, not make public the names of potential victims, the accused perpetrator or the people who made a report of child physical and sexual abuse to the authorities.
- (4) Anonymous Reporting. GDRA recognizes that 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.
- (5) "Whistleblower" Protection. Regardless of outcome, GDRA will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. GDRA 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 a violation of our Athlete Safety Policy and grounds for disciplinary action.



(6) Bad-Faith Allegations. A report of abuse, misconduct or policy violations that is malicious, frivolous or made in bad faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of our Athlete Safety Policy and grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the allegation, a person making malicious, frivolous or bad-faith report may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings.

### **How Reports are Handled**

(1) Suspicion or Allegations of Child Physical or Sexual Abuse. An independent investigation can harm youth and/or interfere with the legal investigative process. GDRA, its staff members and/or volunteers do not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities. As necessary, however, GDRA may ask a few clarifying questions of the minor or person making the report to adequately report the suspicion or allegation to law enforcement authorities.

Volunteer reference for mandatory reporting laws, visit: [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)

GDRA may also investigate allegations of child physical or sexual abuse that are reportable, if such an investigation does not interfere with any ongoing criminal investigation or prosecution for abuse. Such allegations may include:

- (a) Emotional abuse
- (b) Abuse reported outside the relevant statutes of limitation
- (c) Allegations of abuse that were reported to authorities, but: legal authorities did not press criminal charges; criminal charges were filed, but not pursued to trial; or the alleged offender was acquitted at trial.

(2) Immediate Suspension or Termination. When an allegation of child physical or sexual abuse is made against a staff member, youth and/or volunteer, GDRA may immediately remove that individual from contact with any children in the program until the allegation has been investigated by an official agency. A staff member or volunteer's failure to report to the Board of Trustees is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of a staff member and/or dismissal of a volunteer.

(3) Misconduct and Policy Violations. GDRA addresses internally alleged policy violations and misconduct - bullying, harassment, hazing, emotional, physical and sexual - that are not reportable under relevant state and federal law. Staff members and volunteers must report policy violations and misconduct to an immediate supervisor, or member of the Board of Trustees.

(4) Notification. Following GDRA's notice of a credible allegation that results in the removal of an employee, coach or other volunteer, GDRA may consider the circumstances in which it will notify other parents of athletes with whom the accused individual may have had contact. In GDRA's discretion, as appropriate, and after consultation with counsel, GDRA may notify its staff members, contractors, volunteers, parents, and/or athletes of any allegation of child physical or sexual abuse or other criminal behavior that:

- (a) law enforcement authorities are actively investigating; or
- (b) that GDRA is investigating internally

Advising others of an allegation may lead to additional reports of child physical or sexual abuse and other misconduct.

## **6. RESPONDING TO MISCONDUCT**

This section is used to address the following allegations against staff members, athletes, participants and/or volunteers: (a) violations of GDRA Athlete Safety Policies, (b) child abuse (physical or sexual), where GDRA's actions will not undermine an ongoing legal investigation or criminal prosecution.

### **Disciplinary Rules**

On receipt of an allegation, GDRA will determine in its discretion the appropriate steps to address the conduct based on several factors, including (i) the age of the complainant or victim, (ii) the age of the accused and (iii) the nature, scope and extent of the allegations. GDRA's disciplinary response will depend on the nature and seriousness of the incident, and in extreme cases, misconduct will result in summary dismissal. GDRA may undertake a formal investigation and hearing at its discretion. Before taking any disciplinary action, however, GDRA will offer the accused an opportunity to respond. If the accused individual is a minor, GDRA will contact his or her parents or guardians.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Sanctions for violations of the Athlete Safety Policy will be proportionate and reasonable under the circumstances. In addition to day-to-day guidance, GDRA may take the following disciplinary actions, without limitation:

- (1) Inform the individual's direct-line supervisor or in the case of a minor, the minor's parent or guardian
- (2) Provide the individual with guidance, redirection and instruction
- (3) Temporary suspension from competition
- (4) File a formal incident report

- (5) Issue a verbal warning
- (6) Issue a written and/or final written warning
- (7) Implement a limited access agreement (e.g., limiting an individual's access to certain buildings and boathouses or to youth)
- (8) Provide informed supervision, where at least one staff member is informed of the allegation and is instructed to supervise vigilantly the accused individual in his or her interactions with the program and/or organization
- (9) Engage in restorative practices (i.e., creation of a respectful and safe dialogue when misunderstanding or harm has occurred)
- (10) Suspend or terminating employment or membership

**Ongoing Employment and/or Participation**

On receipt of a credible and specific allegation of child abuse or other serious misconduct (e.g., physical and sexual abuse as defined in this policy), GDRA may immediately suspend or terminate the accused individual to ensure participant safety.

**Complainant Protection**

Regardless of outcome, GDRA will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. GDRA will not encourage or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions themselves will be grounds for disciplinary action.

# Appendix A

# GDRA

## Confirmation of Policy Compliance

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby confirm that I  
have read and understand the GDRA ATHLETE SAFETY POLICY

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to:

Director of Youth Rowing