

Safety Policy

The safety of our coaches, players and spectators is very important to our organization. This policy will cover guidelines regarding soccer safety and what is expected of you as a coach, parent, spectator or player.

1. Coach Expectations

- a. Protecting athletes from sexual or other abuse is of paramount importance. See section 5 for strict rules that must be followed by all Mass Youth Soccer/Burlington Youth Soccer registered adults.
- b. Coaches should be respectful and patient toward their players and other teams.
- c. You should never leave a player alone at a field or a game. Please ensure all players are picked-up after practices and games. Two adults always are recommended.
- d. All coaches are required to have an up-to-date CORI background check done, Concussion Training and Abuse Training. Please review our website for instructions (under MA Safe Soccer) or contact our BYSA Risk Manager. No coaches will be allowed to coach if they are not current.
- e. We recommend all coaches review the latest literature on concussions since this is an ever-increasing topic in sports today. Information on various training tools can be found at MA Youth Soccer. <http://www.mayouthsoccer.org/coaches/concussions/>
- f. Visit the Middlesex League website and review the Coaches Handbook at www.middlesexsoccer.org
- g. Electronic Communications should be between coaches and parents.
- h. Must always be respectful to our referees, **no** comments are allowed regarding calls made by the referee.
- i. Review COVID Handbook and ensure team compliance.

2. Parents & Spectator Expectations

- a. Parents & spectators should focus on creating and maintaining a positive experience for all players.
- b. Positive encouragement is acceptable.
- c. Never coach a child as a spectator. This is the coach's job.
- d. Protecting athletes from sexual or other abuse is of paramount importance. See section 5 for strict rules that must be followed by all Mass Youth Soccer/Burlington Youth Soccer registered adults.
- e. Must always be respectful to our referees, **no** comments are allowed regarding calls made by the referee.

3. Player Expectations

- a. Players must be respectful to coaches, teammates and others always. If a coach determines there is an issue, see section 3.b.i below for corrective actions.
- b. Aggressive behavior or bullying is not acceptable.
 - i. The coach is to determine if an issue exists and report the issue to the Age Coordinator. The Age Coordinator would then determine what course of action will be taken to resolve the issue. This may include requiring a parent to be with the child during practices and games to help provide corrective action. If this action is required, the parent would have to complete a CORI background check. If the issue does not improve the player would be dropped from the team and not allowed to continue playing soccer. All reporting of issues from the Coach to the Age Coordinator and Age Coordinator to the player parent shall be documented in writing. The club Risk Manager must also be notified, and the concerns will be presented to the BYSA board.

4. Team and Player Safety

- a. Field and weather conditions
 - i. Walk the practice and game fields to ensure no trash or debris is causing a hazard. Make players aware of any inconsistent conditions.
 - ii. Look at the soccer nets to make sure they are anchored.
 - iii. Determine if weather conditions are too extreme (too hot or cold) to play.
 - iv. If hazards remain, suspend your practice or game and contact Field Coordinator and your Age Coordinator if needed.
 - v. We follow the MIAA rules regarding thunder and lightning. If there is thunder or lightning heard or seen, all practices and games must stop. Play may not resume until the last thunder and lightning has not been heard or seen for 30 minutes. Proceed to shelter as appropriate.

b. Player Safety

- i. Always assess whether your players are wearing the proper soccer equipment to help prevent injuries.
- ii. Proper warm-ups can also help to prevent injuries. Warm-up routines of about 20 minutes are important before practices and games.
- iii. Recognize signs of fatigue or hydration issues with your players. Ensure all players have plenty of water.
- iv. Aggressive play toward teammates or opponents is not acceptable. This could lead to a child getting hurt. Intercede immediately to prevent this from continuing.
- v. Heading the ball is not allowed by players under 11 years old. Additionally, regardless of a player's age, NO player who is on a team that may have a 10-year-old player on the team can head the ball. An example of this situation is a U12 Team (5th & 6th Grader Team) For older players, it is acceptable to practice heading the ball no more than 15 times per week, per player.
- vi. Coaches should ask the player's parents if there are health concerns or allergies that need to be aware of. Proper prevention should be followed to prevent an injury to a player who has a serious food allergy.

c. Player concussions

- i. Mass Youth Soccer along with US Soccer developed best practices regarding concussion awareness and training. Mass Youth Soccer has accepted and agreed to implement the Recognize to Recover (R2R) Program. If a player has sustained a blow to the head or body and complains or is exhibiting symptoms consistent with a concussion, the player must be removed from practice or a game. The player cannot return until a health care professional has cleared the player. The coach must also inform the parent and the BYSA Age Coordinator of the incident. Any other injuries should be noted and communicated to the Age Coordinator.
- ii. MA Youth Soccer provides excess accident insurance for soccer related injuries. Claims must be submitted within 30 days of the incident. See the MA Youth Soccer website for details.

5. Abuse Prevention

Safety Above All is Our mission, vision and belief statements stress that our youth participants' health, safety and wellbeing are driving factors in all that we do, and, in the services, we provide to our members. From the day a young child first registers to play through their final years as a teenager, Massachusetts Youth Soccer provides the best possible environment.

Massachusetts Youth Soccer Safe Soccer Statement the MA Safe Soccer platform provides all Massachusetts Youth Soccer participants (players, coaches, referees, administrators, volunteers and parents) the tools to make their soccer experience safe, healthy and free from emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Adherence to new Mass Youth Soccer Player and Participant Safety Policy:

http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/assets/61/6/ma_safe_soccer_policies_jul_24_2019_final.pdf

New MA Safe Soccer Platform:

<http://www.mayouthsoccer.org/about/ma-safe-soccer/>

Below are the reporting requirements that BYSA must follow:

Reporting – a mechanism that allows a complaint to be easily reported for a reasonable suspicion of Sexual or Physical abuse/neglect, within a 24-hour period of awareness.

Federal regulations state that reports should be made to

- a) local law enforcement and
- b) local/state child protective services,
- c) US Soccer, and
- d) the US Center for SafeSport. EVERYONE is a MANDATORY REPORTER.

Mass Youth Soccer's Mechanism for Reporting:

(Everyone listed below MUST be contacted when physical or sexual abuse is suspected)

1. Local Law Enforcement Number (Burlington Police 781-272-1212)
2. Local Child Protective Services Number (Burlington 781-270-1961)
3. State of Massachusetts Department of Children and Families (DCF)

- Massachusetts Mandatory Reporting Guidelines:

- <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dcf/can-mandated-reporters-guide.pdf>

- 4. BYSA Club Risk Manager

- 5. State Risk Manager –Mary Relic, mrelic@mayouthsoccer.org, 978-598-3613

- 6. National Governing Body (NGB)

- US Soccer Integrity Hotline Number – (312) 528- 7004
- US Soccer – <https://www.ussoccer.com/integrity-hotline>
- US Center for SafeSport – <https://www.safesport.org/report-a-concern>

Other forms of misconduct such as emotional abuse, bullying, hazing, or harassment:

1. Club Risk Manager Contact Information

2. The decision of the Club or BOD should be sent to the State Risk Manager –Mary Relic, mrelic@mayouthsoccer.org, 978-598-3613

- a. **Prohibit Retaliation** – We take amateur athlete safety seriously. There will never be any retaliation against those who are reporting.