

## **United Soccer Alliance of Indiana Procedures for Reporting Abuse or Suspected Abuse, July 16, 2005**

**All incidents of abuse or suspected abuse should be reported to the President of United Soccer Alliance of Indiana.**

One of the most important aspects of creating an awareness program with regard to abuse is to establish set procedures and specific contact person(s) for reporting incidents of abuse or alleged abuse. Communicate these procedures to all participants in your organization so that they know who to turn to and how to report cases of abuse or alleged abuse. In particular, learning about these procedures should be part of each staff or volunteer's initial training or continuing education-type training.

The following steps for reporting abuse or suspected abuse are taken from the book, "For Their Sake: Recognizing, Reporting and Responding to Child Abuse" by Becca Cowan Johnson. Most of these guidelines reference children as victims. However, persons of any age can be victims of abuse. These guidelines are equally applicable to adults as well as children.

### **Taking the Initial Report:**

- a. Assure privacy but not confidentiality. A child may say to you that they have something to tell you but only if you promise not to tell anyone else. If you are a legally mandated reporter, you cannot make such a promise. You may tell the child, "Everything we talk about will be private. But if I think you are going to hurt yourself or someone else, or if someone is hurting you, then I may have to share our conversation with someone else who can help you."
- b. Be calm. If your response to hearing about an abusive situation reflects shock, it will adversely affect the abused child. It is appropriate to share your feelings of concern with the individual. But getting upset about the situation may result in the child's feeling worse about it or worse about his/her role in it.
- c. Believe the child. Do not ask "why" questions, as they may be accusatory. Many children think that adults will not believe them, especially if their abuser has reinforced such thinking by saying, "No one will believe you because you're just a kid." Therefore, it is important not to discount anything a child tells you that involves an abusive situation.
- d. Get the facts, but don't interrogate. In making a report, it is necessary to have certain factual information. However, as mentioned, you do not have to interview the child to determine whether the abuse occurred or didn't occur. Leave that to the experts. Your responsibility is to present the child's story to the authorities.
- e. Reassure the child. It may have taken quite a bit of courage for the child to finally tell his or her story. Assure the child that what happened was not his or her fault. Use such statements as "I believe you," or "This happens to other kids, too," or "It's not your fault this happened." Tell the child that he or she was very brave and mature to tell you about the situation.

### **5.2.2 Reporting the Information to Authorities:**

After you have made a verbal report to the authorities, you will need to follow up with a written statement. Although the amount and type of information included on an abuse report may vary from state to state, the basic information required for either report usually includes the following (if available):

- a. Name, address and phone number of the victim
- b. The nature and extent of injury or abuse
- c. Name, address and phone number of the alleged abuser
- d. Your name, address, phone number and relationship to the victim (if you are not a mandated reporter, you may request anonymity)

It is also beneficial to know or have access to the following information, if possible:

- a. The gender, date of birth or estimated age of the victim.
- b. If the abuse is interfamilial, the names and ages of other children in the household.
- c. The names, addresses, phone numbers of the child's parents or guardians.
- d. Any indication of prior injuries, abuse or neglect.
- e. The circumstances under which you first became aware or were notified of the person's abuse, injuries or neglect.
- f. If the information was given to you by a third party, the identity of that person (unless anonymity was requested).
- g. A description of the incident(s) as reported by the victim.
- h. Physical indicators noted.
- i. Behavioral indicators noted.

### **5.2.3 General Reporting Procedures within Pike Soccer Club**

- a. State that staff members, volunteers, parents and program participants have a duty to report any incidents of abuse or suspected abuse.
- b. Communicate the names of appointed persons within the organization to whom any incidents of abuse or suspected abuse should be reported. However, let every participant, particularly the youth participants, know that any abusive or suspected abusive situation may be reported to any person with whom they feel comfortable. That person will then have the duty to notify the appropriate person within the organization and report the situation to the local authorities.
- c. Express the organization's commitment to taking immediate steps to investigate and follow up on every complaint or report of abuse.
- d. Strongly communicate to all members of your organization the consequences of abuse. Every person should know that in the event of a complaint of abuse against them, they may be temporarily suspended from their duties while an investigation takes place. Once they are cleared of any charges, they may apply for reinstatement within the organization. However, there is no guarantee that they will be reinstated to their former position. Apply these procedures uniformly for all abusers and alleged abusers, regardless of position within the organization.
- e. Give clear authority to a specific individual (or committee) for monitoring the conduct and coaching style of coaches and other volunteers, to ensure that your organization's goals are being met.
- f. Make a clear commitment to educating staff, volunteers, parents and children about abuse.

**Reporting Child Abuse –** After receiving the initial report, make a verbal report to the Indiana Protective Services at the number given below. A written statement maybe requested at this time asking for name of victim, nature or extent of injury or abuse, name of alleged abuser and your name (you may request anonymity). Indiana Protective Services: (800) 800-5556.

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