

Lindhurst Jr. Blazers Football & Cheer

Youth Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy & Procedures

As a youth-serving organization, the Lindhurst Jr. Blazers Football & Cheer considers the safety and well-being of the youth in our programs a top priority. We prohibit abuse and strive to proactively address reports of this type of conduct, even if it means that someone will be embarrassed or upset. We want to hear about problems or concerns, and we will strive to act on them in a fair way in accordance with our policies.

We will report suspected abuse to the proper law enforcement agencies.

Policy and Procedures:

The Lindhurst Jr. Blazers Football & Cheer has adopted the following Policy and Procedures in an effort to provide a safe environment for our coaches, athletes, and their families.

- 1) The Coach Recruitment process shall include the following:
 - a) **Volunteer Application** – Every coach and volunteer working with youth must complete our organization’s written application that sets forth appropriate background information, requires disclosure of any prior claims or allegations of sexual abuse or other inappropriate conduct, and provide the names of at least two individuals as references.
 - b) **Screening** – A designated representative(s) of the organization will interview each prospective coach/volunteer.
 - c) **Background Check** – All current and potential coaches will be subject to a background check, including appropriate inquiries regarding any previous record of sexual abuse or other unlawful activity.
- 2) An Abuse Prevention Orientation shall be conducted annually.

A Board Member will review this policy with coaches, volunteers, and parents each year. The Positive Coaching Alliance/Kidpower video Protecting Youth Athletes from Sexual Abuse will be shown and the companion information sheet, “Protecting Youth Athletes From Sexual Abuse: Key Actions for Parents and Coaches,” [Videos: "Protecting Youth Athletes from Sexual Abuse" | Kidpower International](#) will be distributed to every coach, volunteer, and parent.
- 3) Prohibited Behavior
 - a) Use of degrading language or behavior. Coaches are also responsible for stopping disrespectful behavior between team members, including sexual harassment.
 - b) Threatening or intentionally inflicting physical injury upon anyone, especially a minor. Coaches are also responsible for stopping threatening behavior by players.
 - c) Committing any sexual offense against a minor or engaging in any sexual contact with a minor.
 - d) Making any sexual advance, or engaging in other verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature with a minor.
 - e) Non-related one-adult/one-child interaction except in an emergency where following this policy would be dangerous to the child. In an emergency situation, the coach or volunteer must contact a representative of the organization to inform him or her of this contact and the reason for it. If a child is receiving individual instruction or working with a private

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coach, this activity must be in a public setting rather than behind closed doors.

4) Reporting of Suspected Child Sexual Abuse

- a) A member of the Board of Directors or other official representative will be designated to receive reports of sexual abuse or other inappropriate conduct. This representative will promptly notify the proper law enforcement agencies.
- b) All coaches, volunteers, parents, and program participants are directed to report any incident of abuse or suspected abuse that they witness or that is reported to them to the designated representative of the Board of Directors. Note: This does not preclude individuals from reporting abuse or suspected abuse to the proper law enforcement authorities.
- c) The designated representative will keep other Board members fully informed.
- d) Should a suspected incidence of abuse be reported, the coach/volunteer in question may be temporarily suspended from duties while an investigation takes place.
- e) The Board of Directors, when appropriate, shall communicate reports of child sexual abuse to the league members. The confidentiality of any who makes such a report will be protected.



BETTER ATHLETES
BETTER PEOPLE

Protecting Youth Athletes from Sexual Abuse Key Actions for Parents & Coaches

Child predators tend to avoid children who have vocal adults looking out for them. This document and accompanying video provide practical ways to protect your children from sexual abuse.

You can't identify child predators by how they look. The key is to pay attention to behavior.

Common warning signs of sexual abuse by coaches:

- Giving individual players special gifts
- Spending extra time (by phone/email/text/in person) with individuals outside of official practices/games
- Telling players to keep secrets such as not sharing their conversations or activities with their parents

What can you do as a parent?

- Ask your organization's leadership for its policy on protecting athletes from abuse. If it doesn't have one, share this information sheet with them and tell them about the PCA-Kidpower policy at <http://www.positivecoach.org/our-tools/child-abuse-prevention>.
- A major key to child protection is "No secrets." Tell your children that any problems, favors, gifts, or touch should **never** be a secret.
- Give your children language to use if someone is making them feel uncomfortable. Teach them to say, "Please stop! This makes me feel uncomfortable."
- Encourage kids to tell you **any time** someone's behavior makes them feel unsafe. Even if you feel concerned about what a child has told you, act calm and ask open-ended questions like, "Tell me more about this."
- Tell your children you want them to tell you any time they have a safety problem **even** if it's uncomfortable to talk about, **even** if someone might get upset. Assure them you will do everything you can to keep them safe.
- If your child is receiving individual instruction or working with a private coach, make sure you can drop in any time, that your child knows personal safety skills, and that activities happen in public settings.
- If something makes you uncomfortable, **address the coach** calmly and respectfully. If you don't get a satisfactory response, take your concerns to organizational leadership, or perhaps the police if appropriate.

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Protecting Youth Athletes from Sexual Abuse – Key Actions for Parents & Coaches, continued

- Listen to your gut feelings. If anything seems wrong, even if you can't prove anything, have the courage to ask questions and to be persistent until you are satisfied. Potential abusers look for youth who do not have strong advocates, so your speaking up can help protect your child!

What can you do as a coach?

- Recognize that you are part of a network of people committed to protecting kids in youth sports!
- Give this sheet to all your parents. Tell them that you want them to approach you immediately if they are ever concerned about anything during the season.
- Avoid being alone with an athlete, except in the case of an emergency.

Other Resources

- Learn more about how youth sports can increase kids' emotional safety from [PCA](#).
- Learn more about child protection and teaching kids personal safety skills from [Kidpower](#).
- To make an official report or for information, contact a children's advocacy center such as The National Children's Alliance at www.nca-online.org or call 1-800-239-9950.

