

# PARENT AND GUARDIAN'S HANDBOOK FOR SAFER SPORT

## SAFESPORT LISTENING DO'S AND DON'TS

FOR TEENAGERS (13+)



**When your teenager says, “Swim practice was great. Coach told me my form has improved and he loves the way I look in the team bathing suit.”**

### Do ...

- ▶ Tell your child that you know how much work they've put into improving their form and you are glad the coach has noticed an improvement.
- ▶ Mention that coaches are supposed to notice changes in skills and compliment you on progress. But coaches are never supposed to make comments about your body or how you look in your uniform.
- ▶ Encourage your child to tell you if the coach or any other adult involved with the program makes similar remarks to anyone in the future.
- ▶ Contact the coach and tell them this made you uncomfortable.

### Don't ...

- ▶ Tell your child how lucky they are to have a good body that people notice.
- ▶ Brush aside the comment or downplay its being inappropriate.

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**When your teenager says, “I'm quitting the team. The coach didn't even speak to me after the game. I already felt bad I missed the winning free throw. Even the rest of the team consoled me.”**

### Do ...

- ▶ Remind your child that games are not won or lost by one person's actions. It's a team sport and if the whole team had played better, the game would not have been that close.
- ▶ Comfort your child.
- ▶ Encourage them to wait and decide about quitting when they're less upset.

### Don't ...

- ▶ Say, “Good! That coach was a jerk anyway. We'll get you on a different team.”
- ▶ Assume your child really does want to quit the team instead of saying that out of frustration.
- ▶ Follow the coach's poor choice by ignoring them when you see them next. Model good behavior and speak to the coach whenever possible.

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**When your teenager says, “Coach told us we had to practice until we got it right AND he did not let us get water for two hours.”**

**Do ...**

- ▶ Thank your child for sharing his experience with you.
- ▶ Make sure they drink plenty of fluids while you are reviewing what happened.
- ▶ Confirm what happened with others on the team.

**Don't ...**

- ▶ Doubt the truth of your child's statement.
  - ▶ Question whether the team “deserved” such a punishment.
  - ▶ Most importantly, don't keep this information to yourself. Speak up now by following the league's protocol for reporting suspected abuse. You can help prevent this from happening again and avoid medical consequences.
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**When your teenager says, “The coach told me I've improved so much he wants to take me to a special tournament. It won't cost us anything because he already has rooms reserved.”**

**Do ...**

- ▶ Tell your teen how proud you are of their hard work and improvement in the sport.
- ▶ Ask questions about the tournament date, and if the coach plans to take other teammates.
- ▶ Be uneasy over any kind of “special treatment” reserved only for your teen. Abusers often create opportunities by giving targeted kids special privileges.
- ▶ Check in about the overnight lodging to confirm sleeping arrangements.
- ▶ Talk to the coach about travel protocols versus the way the invitation was given.

**Don't ...**

- ▶ Let your child go on a trip alone with a coach.
  - ▶ Let your child stay in a hotel room or adjoining room with a coach or other staff member.
  - ▶ Hesitate to talk to league officials. Let them determine if there was a verifiable reason for the invitation.
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**When your teenager says, “Pick me up early. I don't want to be in the locker room just with the others after the coach leaves.”**

**Do ...**

- ▶ Ask about what happens in the locker room that your child wants to avoid, and how many times it has happened in the past.
- ▶ Tell them that you'll do whatever you can to ensure their safety.
- ▶ Try to determine if your child is being singled out, or if others are targeted in the locker room.
- ▶ Ask if there are rules prohibiting cell phones in the locker room and if the rules are enforced.
- ▶ Consider checking their social media account to see if targeting is also happening online.

**Don't ...**

- ▶ Hesitate to contact league officials if the answers you get from your child indicate a pattern of abuse or bullying.
- ▶ Make your child feel they have to solve this issue on their own.

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