

LITTLE LEAGUE®

CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The safety and well-being of all participants in the Little League® program is paramount. Little League promotes a player-centric program where young people grow up happy, healthy, and, above all, safe. Little League strives to create an environment that is as safe as possible both on and off the field. Little League does not tolerate any type of abuse against a minor, including, but not limited to, sexual, physical, mental, and emotional (as well as any type of bullying, hazing, or harassment). Little League's goal is to prevent child abuse from occurring through required screenings, training and education, awareness, and mandated reporting of abuse.

Local Little League programs must establish a zero-tolerance culture that does not allow any type of activity that promotes or allows any form of misconduct or abuse (mental, physical, emotional, or sexual) between players, coaches, parents/guardians/caretakers, spectators, volunteers, and/or any other individual. League officials must remove any individual that is exhibiting any type of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct and report the individual to the authorities immediately. Local Little League programs who fail to enforce the zero-tolerance culture or fail to abide by the terms of this policy will face potential revocation or termination of their Little League charter.

NOTE: Commencing with the 2024 season, Little League has updated its Child Protection Program to include all the provisions of Little League's Child Protection Policy into one, comprehensive document, which will be known as Little League Child Protection Program. Incorporating the Policy into the full Program, as outlined here, provides all the information a league needs regarding the protection of its players in one location that clearly outlines the requirements of the local league. The goal is to ensure that local leagues, parents/guardians/caretakers, and all volunteers in the local league understand the obligation and requirements of the local league regarding the protection of its players. Please note that going forward, Little League International will refer to these local league and volunteer requirements as the Little League Child Protection Program, and we will continue to provide educational resources to bring this essential program to life for local leagues and volunteers.

APPLICABILITY

The Child Protection Program applies to anyone who has any involvement in a local Little League program, as well as anyone who participates in Little League-approved programs and activities, including, but not limited to, Board of Directors members, volunteers, managers, coaches, umpires, spectators, players, or anyone who provides regular services to the league and/or have repetitive access to or contact with players or teams. Anyone with questions on who the Child Protection Program applies to should contact Little League International at SecuritySpecialist@LittleLeague.org.

ENFORCEMENT

Local leagues should establish a culture prohibiting any type of activity that promotes or allows any form of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct behavior between players, coaches, parents, volunteers, and any other individual. League officials must remove any individual that is exhibiting any type of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct and report the individual to the authorities immediately.

As part of the chartering process, local leagues agree to comply with all aspects of the Little League Child Protection Program. Any violation of the Child Protection Program may result in the suspension or revocation of a local league's

tournament privileges and/or charter by action of the Charter or Tournament Committees in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

Any questions regarding the interpretation of the Child Protection Program should be directed to Little League International at SecuritySpecialist@LittleLeague.org. The Little League Child Protection Program will be updated and modified as necessary.

DEFINITIONS

Defining child abuse is the first step in battling it. Child abuse can take several different forms, and it is important to understand what is considered child abuse and other terms that are mentioned herein.

Abuse or Neglect: The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C.A §5106g), as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010, defines child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum, “any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation;” or “an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.”

Different types of Child Abuse or Neglect

- Neglect is the negligent failure of a minor’s caretaker to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision which threatens harm to a minor’s health, safety, or welfare.
- Physical Abuse is any non-accidental, intentional, deliberate act that results in physical injury.
- Emotional and Psychological Abuse is any act that diminishes the sense of identity, dignity, and self-worth by humiliation, intimidation, verbal assault, and emotional deprivation.
- Sexual Abuse is any type of maltreatment, violation, or exploitation that refers to the involvement of the child in sexual activity to provide sexual gratification or financial benefit to the perpetrator.
- Bullying is the intentional, repetitive harmful act, words, and behavior that makes the victim feel hurt, scared, and/or ashamed. Bullying can also be an imbalance of real or perceived power between the bully and the victim. Different types of bullying include, but are not limited to, physical bullying, verbal bullying, emotional bullying, harassment, and hazing.
- Grooming is the process where an individual creates a relationship with a minor or the minor's family to gain trust so he or she can take advantage of a minor for a sexual purpose.

Child/Minor: Any individual who is younger than 18 years of age or who is not an emancipated minor.

League Programs and Activities: Any games, practices, tournaments, approved activities, and/or approved special games are considered Little League programs and activities.

Volunteer: Any person in the organization who provides regular service to the league and has contact with minors: coaches, managers, the Board of Directors, program workers, concession volunteers or workers, bus and carpool drivers, maintenance workers, or anyone that has repetitive access to or contact with players or teams.

LOCAL LEAGUE CHILD PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

All chartered Little League programs **must** adhere to the following requirements to remain affiliated with Little League Baseball and Softball:

1. **COMPLETE BACKGROUND CHECKS**

Utilize the Little League volunteer application form to conduct annual background checks on volunteers and prohibit anyone with any offenses that would disqualify them as a participant in any Little League activity.

2. **MANDATORY TRAINING & CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Annually require all volunteers to complete an Abuse Awareness Training provided by USA Baseball or a comparable training.

3. **MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIRMENTS**

Report Child Abuse, including sexual abuse involving a minor, to the proper authorities within 24 hours.

4. **NON-RETALIATION FOR REPORTING**

Adopt a policy that prohibits retaliation against “good faith” reports of child abuse.

5. **PROHIBIT ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS**

Adopt a policy that limits one-on-one contact with minors without being in an observable and interruptible distance from another adult.

1. COMPLETE BACKGROUND CHECKS

A. VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

All local leagues are required to use the [Little League Official Volunteer Application](#) for all managers, coaches, members on the Board of Directors, and any other person, or volunteer, who provides regular service to the league and/or has access to minors. The Little League Official Volunteer Application is available through the [JDP Quick App](#), within the Little League registration platform [through Sports Connect](#) or online at [LittleLeague.org/BackgroundChecks](#). The applicant must submit a government-issued photo identification card for the league to verify that the information on his/her volunteer application is correct. The completed volunteer application enables the local Little League program to run and review a background check.

An annual background check, in compliance with Little League Regulation 1(c) 8 and 9, is required to be conducted on every individual before the applicant assumes **any** of his/her duties for the current season. The background check must, at a minimum, meet the standard of a nationwide criminal search, a national sex offender registry search, a review of the [U.S. Center for SafeSport’s Centralized Disciplinary Database](#) and the Little League International Ineligible/Suspended List. Information regarding free background check services is available at [LittleLeague.org/BackgroundChecks](#).

Each league shall have the right to interview applicants. The applicant must be interviewed by an approved board member. All volunteers selected to participate must be educated on Little League’s Child Protection Program and his/her role in the protection of minors in the program. The volunteer must also be advised that as a volunteer, he/she is a mandatory reporter per the [SafeSport](#) Law.

A minimum of three reference checks must be provided by each new volunteer. The board shall have the right to have an approved board member conduct reference checks before a new volunteer is allowed participation in a Little League program. All information from reference checks should be documented, dated, and signed by the board member conducting the reference check. Reviewing the reference check is important to determine if any information from the reference differs from what is represented on the volunteer application and/or during the review. A league is not required to conduct reference checks on returning volunteers.

B. BACKGROUND CHECK PROCESS

Per Little League Regulation 1(c) 8 and 9, every individual is required to complete a volunteer application **every year** before the applicant assumes **any** of his/her duties for the current season. The individual is required to consent to a background check during the volunteer application process. The local league Board of Directors must conduct, review, and verify that the background check process is completed.

The league’s Board of Directors must review the results of the background check with the Little League Official Volunteer Application and a government-issued photo identification card to verify that the information provided on both is identical (full name, DOB, and address). The league should confirm that the full **legal** name is correct (for example, John J Smith JR. not Johnny Smith). Some states and local counties only provide full legal name, and DOB as identifiers for the National Criminal Database.

Little League provides every chartered league up to 125 free background checks through [JD Palatine \(JDP\)](#). JDP offers a quick and easy option for potential volunteers to complete their volunteer application and a background check in the same process – the [JDP QuickApp](#). To use this tool, the League Official needs the potential volunteer's full name and email address. The League Official will input the potential participant's information into the JDP platform, which automatically sends an email to the potential participant with a secure link to the Little League Official Volunteer Application for the potential volunteer to submit their own information for a background check.

For leagues that utilize [Sports Connect](#), there is an opportunity for potential volunteers to complete the Official Little League Volunteer Application and background check in one platform. As the Preferred League Technology Platform Provider of Little League, Sports Connect is integrated together with JDP to provide a process for the league officer to review and approve a potential volunteer directly in the Sports Connect platform. For more information on how a league can utilize the Sports Connect/JDP Integration, visit [LittleLeague.org/JDPSC](#).

Each October, the background check system will reset for the upcoming season. The background check must, at a minimum, meet the standard of a nationwide criminal search, a national sex offender registry search, a review of the U.S. Center for SafeSport's Centralized Disciplinary Database, and the Little League International Ineligible/Suspended List. Background checks conducted by JDP for local Little League programs include all of the required database searches. Background checks completed through JDP include a National Criminal File, plus Developed Names search and social security ID search. Local leagues may utilize other background check providers but will need to confirm the provider's ability to satisfy all of the above requirements for a complete search, which may require contacting Little League International for a review of the Little League International Ineligible/Suspended List.

NOTE: Some states have enacted laws that require additional background check requirements that are different from or supplement those mandated by Little League. For additional information on state requirements, visit [LittleLeague.org/StateLaws](#). Local leagues are required to satisfy both the state-specific requirements and the Little League requirements.

C. OFFENSES THAT PROHIBIT PARTICIPATION

Local Leagues shall not permit any person to participate in any manner whose background check reveals a pending charge, conviction for, guilty plea, no contest plea, or admission to any crime involving or against a minor. An individual is also prohibited from participating as a volunteer if he/she appears on the [U.S. Center for SafeSport's Centralized Disciplinary Database](#) and/or Little League International Ineligible/Suspended List. A local league may impose stricter guidelines and prohibit any individual from participating as a volunteer if the league deems the individual unfit or inappropriate to work or volunteer in the league. If a potential volunteer appears on the National Sex Offender Registry, the league must contact Little League International at SecuritySpecialist@LittleLeague.org before appointing the volunteer to participate in any capacity in the league. Little League International will advise of the next steps and aid the decision-maker in the process.

NOTE: If an individual involved with a league, or any activity of the Little League program, is under investigation for any type of child abuse, or has a pending charge against, or involving, a minor, that individual must be suspended until the outcome of the investigation or pending charges are complete and the allegations are resolved.

If a local league becomes aware of information at any time, by any means whatsoever, that an individual, including, but not limited to, volunteers, or players has been charged with, convicted of, pled guilty, pled no contest, or admitted to any crime involving or against a minor, the local league must immediately contact the applicable governmental agency to confirm the accuracy of the information before allowing the volunteer to participate in their position or per their Little League

Constitution suspend the volunteer until the information is received and reviewed.

D. Properly Handling Sensitive Documents

The local Little League program must exercise due diligence to protect any information that is provided. To protect the privacy of volunteers and others, the following best practices have been established:

- The local League President shall only share, on a need-to-know basis, any personal, non-public record or information contained in the volunteer application or attached documents, with other League Officers to make personnel decisions.
- If a league is utilizing the JDP QuickApp, the records of a volunteer will remain on the JDP Portal as long as the local league is an active user with JDP.

If a league is still utilizing paper Volunteer Applications, the league must adhere to the following protocol:

- The local League President must maintain the record of a volunteer in a locked, secured location for at least two (2) years after the volunteer is no longer in the league. When it is time to dispose of these records, the records must be **shredded or confidentially destroyed**. All actions concerning these records must comply with any applicable laws.
- If a local Little League Board of Directors has records utilized for reviewing a potential volunteer's background check, the Board of Directors must maintain these records for the same length of time that the league maintains the volunteer's application. The records must be maintained in a locked and secured area, such as the League President's home, and not in a clubhouse or similar public facility. The records must also be properly shredded or confidentially destroyed when it is time to dispose of the records.

2. MANDATORY TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Training and Education are important tools in the prevention of abuse. In 2018, the "Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and SafeSport Authorization Act of 2017" became Federal law. As part of SafeSport, abuse awareness training has been highly encouraged for participants and volunteers in the Little League program. Commencing with the 2024 season, all individuals who complete the volunteer application for a league must annually complete Abuse Awareness Training. This includes anyone who wishes to be a manager, coach, member of the Board of Directors, volunteer, and any other person who provides regular services to the league and/or has repetitive access to or contact with players or teams. As part of creating a player-centric environment, each local league should also provide ongoing education to its members beyond the minimal required training. Each league should create a program within its league to keep parents, volunteers, and players informed in all aspects of player protection and safety.

A. Mandatory Abuse Awareness Training

Annual Abuse Awareness Training, in compliance with Little League Regulation I(c)(10), is required to be conducted by every individual before assuming **any** of his/her duties for the current season. Each local league is permitted to determine which specific abuse awareness training program should be completed by their league. The Abuse Awareness training provided by USA Baseball is hosted by former Chicago Cubs catcher, David Ross. The free Abuse Awareness for Adults course provides resources to create a positive and safe environment for all athletes, coaches, parents, legal guardians, and umpires by understanding how to recognize misconduct and abuse of all types. Topics covered include how to identify and report incidents and what abuse awareness policies should be in place. The interactive Abuse Awareness training should take approximately 30 minutes. The training can be accessed at USABDevelops.com/page/3532/courses.

Leagues may consider other Abuse Awareness trainings such as the trainings provided by:

- U.S. Center for SafeSport
USCenterForSafeSport.org
- Darkness to Light
D2L.org

- Abuse Prevention
AbusePreventionSystems.org

The league is responsible for verifying that each required individual has completed the training by obtaining certificates of completion from each individual and retaining a copy of the certificate. The training must be completed on or after October 1 of each year to be considered valid for the upcoming season.

It is important that all volunteers in a league complete the training on an annual basis. Even though it may be a training the individual has completed in the past, it is important to keep the information that comes from this training fresh in everyone's mind. The more individuals in a league or involved in a league that have the information that the Abuse Awareness Training provides, the better.

B. Recommended Continuing Education Opportunities for Leagues:

To help create a player-centric environment, each league should implement the following continuing education for its members:

- **Meet with Volunteers:** As Little League is a volunteer-led program, membership in local leagues changes from year to year. It is important to hold regular meetings in which both volunteers and parents can talk about child abuse and ask questions. The Child Protection Program should be reviewed with participants annually. Since Little League could not exist without the time and effort from volunteers and parents, it is important to communicate directly with the volunteers. For that reason, the Little League Child Protection Program should be freely copied and distributed to all adults in the local league. Local Leagues are encouraged to maintain a link on their local league website to the Little League Child Protection Program.
- **Make Your Position Clear:** Little League has clearly defined rules for dealing with child abuse. Make adults and minors aware that the local league will not tolerate child abuse in any form. Suspected abuse must be reported and retaliation for good faith reporting is prohibited.
- **Stress the Role of Adults in Your League:** Minors should be encouraged to take an active role in protecting themselves, but the responsibility for ensuring their safety ultimately rests with the adults. Adults can identify potentially uncomfortable situations, for themselves, as well as for children. The welfare of the players in your league is the highest priority in any situation.
- **Advise Parents of Training Opportunities for Minors:** USA Baseball also provides Abuse Awareness for Minors training at USABDevelops.com/page/3532/courses. Parents should be advised of this resource that is available for their children.
- **Participate in ASAP:** More than 93% of leagues in the United States participate in the [A Safety Awareness Program \(ASAP\)](#). Basic safety procedures can help in the identification and prevention of child abuse. Leagues can also include their own additional best practices to prevent child abuse in their league's ASAP program. One of the requirements for the ASAP program is to properly distribute the plan, which should incorporate the Little League Child Protection Program.
- **Provide Additional Resources:** Many organizations will gladly assist your efforts to protect your players, several of which are listed below. Feel free to provide the name of the below organizations and the websites to parents, volunteers, umpires, as well as minors.
 - [SafeSport](#)
 - SafetoCompete.org
 - USABDevelops.com/page/3532/courses
 - [National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#)
 - [American SPCC](#)

C. Grooming

Grooming is a tactic used by sexual predators to methodically build a trusting relationship with victims, parents, and the community to place themselves in a position of trust, which the perpetrator then uses to draw the victim into a sexual relationship. Many times, the perpetrator becomes a family friend. Grooming can be subtle and hard to recognize. It's important to bring awareness of grooming to all individuals in the league. Understanding the

grooming process and behaviors of grooming can help prevent abuse from occurring. The required Abuse Awareness training for all volunteers is one way to begin to raise awareness within the league of grooming. The more individuals in the league who are equipped with knowledge to understand and recognize grooming the better protected the children are within the league.

Leagues can use the following resources to help educate the members of the league on grooming:

USA Center for SafeSport:

- [What Parents Need to Know: Grooming in Sport](#)

Safe to Compete:

- [The Discussion Guide \(Ages 5-10\)](#)
- [The Discussion Guide \(Ages 11-17\)](#)
- [Tips for Protecting Child Athletes from Sexual Abuse](#)

D. Bullying

Any type of bullying can have serious effects on players. Anyone who engages in harassment, in any form (verbal, physical, cyber, etc.), or commits violence or acts of intimidation shall be prohibited from participating in Little League. This applies to player-to-player, adult-to-player, player-to-adult, and adult-to-adult interactions. The League should strive to have a safe and encouraging environment for all individuals participating in the league. The following types of behavior are not accepted in the Little League culture and should not be tolerated at the Local League:

- **Physical Bullying:** Hitting, pushing, shoving, punching, strangling, hair-pulling, stealing, excessive tickling, or any other deliberate and inappropriate touching.
- **Verbal Bullying:** Hurtful, deliberate name-calling, banter, taunting, intimidating, threatening, gossiping, and teasing.
- **Emotional Bullying:** Rejection, terrorizing, extorting, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics, such as race, disability, ethnicity, or perceived sexual orientation, manipulating friendships, isolating, and peer pressure.
- **Social/Cyber Bullying:** Deliberately excluding, alienating, ignoring, spreading rumors, impersonation, inappropriate photographs, video shaming, and hacking social media accounts.
- **Harassment:** Harassment includes bullying and all of the actions listed above, as well as subjecting someone to unwanted sexual advances, involving physical contact or explicit written or verbal language.
- **Hazing:** An initiation, ritual process involving different types of harassment that intentionally humiliates the individual or a group.

Leagues can use the following resources to help educate members of the league on bullying:

[Bullying 101: Understanding and Responding | Resources | USAB Develops](#)

E. Creating a Player-Centric Environment

Both children and adults may experience frustration at times. It is important to recognize when a person needs to take a break from activities to calm down. Adult volunteers should never escalate a situation when someone is upset. Instead, he/she should attempt to de-escalate any stressful situation.

Little League recommends that local leagues create and issue a “Code of Conduct” that is upheld by players, managers, coaches, board members, umpires, other volunteers, and parents. This should be reviewed each season to establish a safe environment for everyone involved with the local Little League season.

If an individual (player, volunteer, or parent) feels stressed out and cannot handle the situation, he/she should remove themselves from the area until the issue is de-escalated. These situations might include:

- A coach screaming at an umpire - the game should be paused until the coach and umpire can remove themselves until the issue is de-escalated.
- A player gets emotional about a bad play and starts to break down on his teammates - The coach should remove the player from the dugout until he can resolve the issue.
- A parent in the crowd that does not agree with the placement of their child in the lineup/field - A volunteer should remind the parent about respecting the game and ask them to step away or to respect the coach's decision.

Create a positive area for players to enjoy the game and have fun by implementing a "Cheer Only Zone" at the field to remove the negativity for players. Leagues can utilize training tools for their board members on how to implement a positive coaching experience through:

- [Little League Diamond Leader Training Program](#)
 - Focused on ensuring children have a positive, well-rounded experience on and off the field, the Little League Diamond Leader Training Program is a FREE educational resource that provides coaches with an understanding of the impact that mental, social, and emotional well-being has in youth sports through detailed information, interactive scenarios, and a variety of additional resources. Through this course, which navigates Little League volunteers through real-life scenarios that are being faced in local leagues all around the world each year, coaches will have a better understanding of the impact he/she has on the players, both on and off the field.
- [Positive Coaching Alliance](#) ("PCA")
 - PCA offers resources for coaches, parents, athletes, and leaders to make better athletes and better people. As young people return to playing sports after going through the trauma of being away from school, friends, and sports due to the coronavirus, we need to make sure our coaches are equipped with the skills to deal with their social and emotional needs.

3. MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE

When an allegation of abuse is made against a local Little League volunteer, the league must protect the child from any further potential abuse by keeping the alleged abuser away from all children in the program until the incident is reported to one or more of the below outlets **and** completely investigated. The Safe Sport Act extends mandatory reporting to all volunteers in the league. Fifty (50) States and the District of Columbia have enacted laws which address mandatory reporting of child abuse to protect the health and safety of children. Little League has compiled a summary of all currently existing federal and state laws regarding mandatory reporting of child abuse at [State Specific Information on Child Abuse - Little League \(LittleLeague.org/StateLaws\)](#). It is strongly recommended that local leagues consult with legal counsel in their jurisdiction to determine the applicability, if any, of federal, state and local requirements and laws to its programs regarding the reporting of child abuse. **An individual who is required, but fails to report suspected child abuse, is subject to criminal and civil penalties.**

A. Investigating Suspected Abuse

Once a report of abuse has been made, the league should promptly notify the alleged abuser that he/she is suspended from any involvement with the league until the investigation is completed. Little League urges local leagues to work with a lawyer who can advise them regarding the obligations of the league and advise about the rights of an alleged abuser. If the investigation substantiates the allegations, the local league must assure that the individual will not have any further contact with the children in the local league.

All information and statements received from the parties involved with the incident (suspect, victim, witness, etc.) must be passed onto the proper authorities. **Local Little League officials should not attempt to investigate suspected abuse. Let law enforcement and child services professionals conduct the investigation.**

B. Reporting of Suspected Abuse

As child abuse reporting laws vary from state to state, each league should refer to the law of its specific state for guidance. Federal law establishes a nationwide standard of duty to report suspected child abuse. Any volunteer who participates in the league must report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse, within 24 hours to the proper authorities. If a case of abuse is suspected within a league, it must be reported to the appropriate child services organizations and/or local law enforcement, as well as to the League President and District Administrator. **REMEMBER: If you or someone else is in immediate and serious danger, you should call 911.**

After making a report to law enforcement, the league may also consider contacting one of the following organizations for additional support:

- [U.S. Center for SafeSport](#)
- [The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's](#)
- [The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline](#)

After making a report of abuse or becoming aware of a report of abuse involving a volunteer in the league, the local Board of Directors must also notify Little League International by emailing SecuritySpecialist@LittleLeague.org.

C. Suspension/Termination

If allegations of abuse are made against an individual in the league, the local league must take steps to assure that the individual will not have any further contact with the children in the local league.

While allegations of abuse are under investigation or if criminal charges are pending, the league must promptly notify the individual that he/she is suspended until the matter is resolved by an external investigation or through the court system. While an individual is suspended, he/she may not volunteer in any local league activity.

If the allegations of abuse against an individual are substantiated, the local league must notify the individual that he/she is terminated from their position and may no longer volunteer for Little League in any capacity. The Board of Directors should communicate with the members of their local league about the termination.

D. Communication from the League

The local league's Board of Directors must be prepared to contact parents if a substantiated abuse allegation is made against a volunteer or participant within their league. The league must remember that both parties (suspect and victim) have privacy rights. The league must only provide information available in a public record, without any commentary. Public records are documents received from a governmental body/agency that are available to the general public (such as police or sheriff's records, court records, a statement from the arresting police department). If a league is contacted by the media, assistance is available by contacting Little League International at Media@LittleLeague.org. Additional tips on how to handle crisis communications can also be found at LittleLeague.org/CrisisCommunications.

4. NON-RETALIATION FOR REPORTING

A local league may not retaliate against any individual within the league who makes a good faith report of suspected abuse, even if the allegation is later determined to be unsubstantiated. Reporters of abuse cannot be afraid to come forward in cases where he/she either has firsthand knowledge of or a good faith belief that abuse has occurred, even if there is a possibility that the report is wrong. The local league should encourage all individuals in the league to be vigilant and observant in regard to the safety and protection of the children in the league. Many states provide immunity to those who report suspected child abuse in "good faith."

5. PROHIBIT ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

Most child sexual abuse or grooming is perpetrated in isolated, one-on-one situations. By reducing such interactions between players and adult volunteers, you reduce the risk of child sexual abuse. However, one-on-one time with trusted adults is also healthy and valuable for a child. Policies concerning one-on-one interactions protect children while allowing for these beneficial relationships. To minimize the chance of an individual's opportunity to groom or abuse a player, the

league must adopt a one-one-one policy relating to the interactions between a player and any adult volunteer of the league during the league's programs and activities. The League should adopt a policy prior to the start of the season and provide a copy to all volunteers within the league. At a minimum the policy should include the following:

- Volunteers are prohibited from being alone with a minor athlete during the league's programs and events unless:
 - There is an emergency.
 - There is written permission from the player's parent/legal guardian.
 - The volunteer is the player's parent/legal guardian, sibling, or personal care assistant.
- A Volunteer's interactions with players must be observable and interruptible by another adult.
- Volunteers are prohibited from contacting players directly through social media or electronic communication unless another adult volunteer or the player's parent/legal guardian is copied.
- Volunteers are discouraged from interacting one-on-one with unrelated minor athletes in settings outside of local league program and activities (such as the volunteer's home, a restaurant, a vehicle, personal communication including electronic communication).
- Players may not reside with unrelated volunteers for the purpose of participation qualification within the league.
- If a volunteer is in a position where he/she is left alone with a player, he/she should not leave the child so long as the volunteer has exhausted all the options above to comply with the guidelines of the policy. Likewise, if a child is injured and must be transported to a hospital, urgent care, or treatment center, the volunteer should not leave the child alone if all options have been exhausted to comply with the policy in an emergency where medical treatment is necessary.
- Physical contact between volunteers and players should be very limited. Some examples of appropriate physical touch include high fives or administering appropriate first aid.

SUMMARY

The safety and well-being of all participants in the Little League program is paramount. The Little League Child Protection Program provides the necessary tools for local leagues to create an environment that is as safe as possible for its players. Protection begins at the local league level. Every local Little League program must place the safety and well-being of its players above all else. Each league must adhere to the requirements of the Child Protection Program and utilize the additional resources provided to customize its own program to protect its participants which meets the unique needs of the league. Parents/Guardians play a critical role in assuring the safety of their players. It is critical that leagues arm parents/guardians with awareness and share the Child Protection Program with everyone within the league. Little League International is available to offer assistance to local leagues regarding the Child Protection Program by contacting SecuritySpecialist@LittleLeague.org.