



## USA DANCE

### Abuse and Harassment Policy Guidelines

USA Dance is committed to providing a safe environment for its members, participants, coaches, officials and volunteers. Sexual, physical or emotional abuse or harassment in any form by any USA Dance members, participants, coaches, officials and volunteers is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

When any members, participants, coaches, officials, staff and volunteers are subjected to sexual, physical or emotional abuse or harassment in any form it undermines the mission and values of USA Dance.

USA Dance advocates building strong self-images among youth participants, strives to promote good sportsmanship throughout the organization and encourages qualities of mutual respect, courtesy and tolerance.

All members of the organization, as well as parents, spectators and other invitees are expected to observe and adhere to the following principles.

1. Abuse or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated within the organization. This means USA Dance does not accept physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse, harassment or similar misconduct from any person towards athletes, staff, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents, spectators or any other persons while they are participating in or preparing for events or activities conducted under the protection and support of USA Dance.
2. Physical and sexual abuse, including, but not limited to, striking, hitting, kicking, biting or wanton gesturing, lewd remarks, indecent exposure, unwanted physical contact, any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, are strictly prohibited within the organization and as a part of its events and activities. Physical abuse does not include physical contact that is reasonably designed to coach, teach or demonstrate a dance related skill.
3. Emotional abuse or verbal abuse is also prohibited. This may include, but is not limited to: yelling, insulting, threatening, mocking, demeaning behavior or making abusive statements in regard to a person's race, gender, religion, nationality/ethnicity, sex or age. Emotional abuse does not include controlled and disciplined verbal communication that is generally accepted in sports as a reasonable method of coaching or teaching the sport.

USA Dance recommends taking the following precautions to help ensure a safe environment for all members, staff, volunteers, coaches, officials, and participants.

1. Encourage parents to become as active as possible in sponsored activities, practices and other events. The more the parents are involved, the less likely it is for abusive situations to develop.
2. We strongly advise that no adult person allow him/herself to be alone with a child or with any group of children in a private setting during or while they are participating in sponsored activities of USA Dance. In particular, in such circumstances, we recommend that coaches or other adult members of the organization:
  - Do not drive alone with a child participant in the car.
  - Do not take a child alone to the locker room, bathrooms, or any other private room.
  - Provide one-on-one training or individual coaching with the assistance of another adult or athlete.
  - Have private conversations with youth participants within view of others instead of a private office.
  - Do not socialize individually with the participants outside of sponsored activities.
3. When traveling overnight with youth participants, children should be paired up with other children of the same gender and similar age group, with chaperones in separate but nearby rooms.

4. Harassment and abuse are defined in various sources such as state law, case law, sports organization and professional association codes of conduct and training manuals, corporate and business workplace documents and human right commission materials. USA Dance has not adopted any specific definition of harassment or abuse, choosing instead to defer to such general sources and definition for reference and application, depending on the circumstances. As further elaboration of examples given above, the following generally describe conduct that may be considered harassment or abuse:

5. Any improper or inappropriate comment, action or gesture directed toward a person or group that is related to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability of other personal characteristic.

- Creating an environment through behavior or course of conduct that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, demeaning or offensive.

- Harassment usually occurs when one person engages in abusive behavior or asserts unwarranted power or authority over another, whether intended or not, and may include, for example, name-calling, threats, belittling, unwelcome advances and requests for sexual favors (as well as undue pressure to perform or succeed).

- Harassment includes child abuse.

- Child abuse can include physical contact – or the threat of it – that intentionally causes bodily harm or injury to a child. This may include, for example, hitting, shaking, kicking, shoving, forcing an athlete to train or compete when injured or mandating excessive exercise as a form of punishment. It may also include touching for the purpose of causing sexual arousal or gratification that involves a child, rape, incest, fondling, exhibitionism and sexual exploitation. It may also include chronic attacks on a child's self-esteem, such a psychologically destructive behavior consisting of ridiculing, screaming, swearing, racist comments, threatening, stalking, hazing and isolating.

1. USA Dance will timely respond to any and all allegations of abuse or harassment in matters that are within the purview (scope or extent of function, ability, or authority) and jurisdiction of officials or persons at other levels or of other organizations will be timely responded to and dealt as appropriate.

2. USA Dance cannot guarantee complete confidentiality of complaints. However, USA Dance will strive to insure that all complaints are handled in a manner, to the greatest degree possible, protects the rights of all parties.

3. When necessary and appropriate, this information will be communicated to the appropriate authorities for investigation and should be reviewed by appropriate officials, with timely notification to the alleged offender of such allegations.

4. Any person accused of sexual or physical abuse may be asked to resign voluntarily or may be suspended until the matter is investigated and resolved. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt in the alleged abuse, the continued presence of the person could be detrimental to the reputation of the organization and could be harmful to the participants. A person who is accused but later cleared of the charged, may apply to have a suspension lifted or, if applicable, to be reinstated within the organization. Reinstatement is not a right, and no assurance is made that the person will be reinstated to his/her former position.

5. Any person or member organization that fails to appropriately report, who makes a false report or who threatens retaliation or reprisal against an individual for reporting sexual, physical or emotional abuse or harassment in any form will be subject to discipline or other action as may be within the purview and jurisdiction of USA Dance.