

SMA Child Protection Policy

Purpose

The SMA believes that children should be able to enjoy playing in the society just as the adults do! We also recognize the special nature of care required for our young members and guests. While we believe that protecting children is everyone's duty, we have adopted a set of minimum standards to ensure the protection of children while engaging in SMA events or meetings.

General Expectations

Any parent or caregiver is ultimately responsible for the care and supervision of any and all children they bring to an event or other gathering within the SMA. It should never be assumed that any other individuals or groups will provide care or supervision for children who are not their own. These policies and guidelines are established primarily in regard to the operation of activities involving children; and serve as a general protection policy. The SMA does not typically provide "babysitting services" to its members. If an SMA event does feature a children's activity, parents or caregivers are strongly encouraged to still supervise their children during these activities.

It is everyone's responsibility, young and aged, to ensure the safe and fun operation of the SMA!

A. Minimum Supervision Standards

Section A1:

The Table below outlines the absolute minimum standards for children attending our events and the number of adults to be present. Though the chart below is an acceptable guide to the supervision of children, every effort must be made to ensure AT LEAST TWO (2) adults not related, are present to supervise children. These adults must adhere to this policy as well as other established policies and guidelines established by the SMA. The two adults should also be of the opposite sex (1 male and 1 female). Any more restrictive state and/or government regulations shall supersede these standards.

Diaper or clothing changes should be completed by the child's parent/legal guardian only.

Section A2:

Any and all adults who are officially tasked with the supervision of children, a member or leader of a children's group/order are required to undergo a background check to include a search of the national sex offender's registry.

Additionally, any individual who meets the criteria in section 2 must recertify each year, as well as take any recommended refresher courses prescribed by the Board of Directors in order to maintain their position within the children's group.

Section A3:

Code of Conduct for Safeguarding Children in the SMA

Why this is important?

A Code of Conduct has a number of important functions. It:

- sets out what behavior is acceptable and unacceptable
- defines standards of practice expected from those to whom it applies
- forms the basis for challenging and improving practice and ability
- helps to safeguard staff/volunteers by encouraging them to adhere to agreed standards of practice
- sets out for children and parents/guardians the standards of practice which they and the organization should expect from those who work/volunteer with children.

The SMA supports and requires all SMA staff and SMA volunteers involved with children and young people (under 18) to observe these standards of practice, including verbal and non-verbal actions when involved in activities with children.

All concerns about breach of this Code of Conduct will be taken seriously and responded to in line with the relevant SMA policies.

The standards of practice given below are indicative but not exhaustive and serve to highlight key areas.

Good Practices

- Make sport fun, enjoyable and promote fair play.
- Treat all children equally, with respect, dignity and fairness.
- Involve parents/guardians wherever possible.
- Build balanced relationships based on mutual trust.
- Include children in the decision-making process wherever possible.
- Always work in an open environment, wherever possible. Avoid private or unobserved situations.
- Put the welfare of each child first, before winning or achieving performance goals.
- Be an excellent role model including not smoking or drinking alcohol at children's activities.
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism. A good rule of thumb is to praise the child for their efforts, offer methods to improve their performance, then praise them again for aspect of their performance they are doing well.
- Recognize the developmental needs and capacity of children.

- Avoid excessive training and competition, pushing children against their will and putting undue pressure on them is detrimental to their development.

Prohibited Actions in the presence of children:

The SMA members, staff and volunteers will follow State and Federal law regarding conduct with children. Any behavior that can be construed as sexual abuse will not be tolerated. Allegations of sexual abuse will be reported immediately to the local authorities (via the event steward or seneschal) to investigate. Please see section B for further guidance.

Further prohibitions are:

- Allowing children (under 21) to consume alcohol.
- Allowing allegations made by a child to go un-investigated.
- Inviting or allowing children to stay with you alone, at your home, camp or other private area.
- Sharing a room alone with a child.

The following should be avoided:

- Having 'favorites' – this could lead to resentment and jealousy by other children and could be misinterpreted by others.
- Spending excessive amounts of time alone with children away from others.

- Entering children’s bedrooms/sleeping areas on trips away from home, unless in an emergency situation or in the interest of health and safety. If it is necessary to enter rooms, knock and say that you are coming in. The door should remain open, if appropriate.
- Where possible, doing things of a personal nature for children that they can do for themselves or that can be completed by the child's parent/guardian.
- Developing an intimate relationship with anyone involved in the children’s activities.

B: Society Response to allegations or unsafe behavior.

Section B1:

When an allegation is made by either a child, a parent or other party

- (a) Remove the child to a secure location away from the accused and have at least 1 male and 1 female present with the child while notifications are made to:
 - (i) The child’s legal parent or guardian
 - (ii) Senior most society officer on site
 - (iii) Law Enforcement (if applicable)
- (b) No one other than those investigating the allegation should attempt to speak with the child regarding the allegations or people involved in the allegation.
- (c) Those two individuals tasked with securing the child should take notes as to the child’s demeanor, appearance, and any statements made by their child.
- (d) NEVER attempt to clean the child up, change clothing or otherwise alter anything regarding the child unless emergency medical attention is required.

Section B2:

The officer receiving notice of allegations will ensure these policies and procedures are followed. Once the alleged victim has been removed from site by parents, guardians, or emergency services personnel, the society officer will make notice to the Board of Directors, or other designated society officer.

Section B3:

The accused individual will immediately be placed on a 90 day probation and prohibited from attending any SMA events pending the outcome of any criminal investigations enacted as a result of allegations against them.

Section B4:

Any individual who has been found to have violated these policies and procedures may be dismissed and permanently banned from the SMA. Any individual convicted of a sex crime will be banned from the SMA.

Section B5:

Parents and caregivers are responsible for the behavior of their children. All individuals regardless of age are expected to maintain proper conduct which is neither disruptive nor offensive to others. Any member who continues to disrupt or use foul or other offensive language after 1 warning from the event/meeting officer may be asked to leave the event/meeting. This provision applies to the behavior of an individual's children as well. Individuals (including children) who show a pattern of disruptive behavior may be banned from attending SMA events entirely provided that documentation from three (3) different events required that individual to be asked to leave due to their disruptive behavior. At the occurrence of the third ejection from an event, regardless of time frames in between these ejections, any officer may request a permanent ban from the Board of Directors or their designee. Parents or caregivers who fail to provide adequate care or supervision for their children during events which causes a disruption or safety issue will also be subject to the disciplinary measures outlined in this policy.

I have read and agree to abide by this Code of Conduct. I have also read and agree to abide by the SMA Child Protection Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.

Name: _____

SMA Number: _____

Signed: _____

Date signed: _____

Witnessed by: (Child Protection Officer, if possible)
