

BRIDGE II SPORTS

Bridge II Sports Child Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Millions of children and young people take part in sporting activities every day across the world. For some children this is purely for recreation and fun. Others may participate in sport for skill development and competitions. For some young people sport may be their chosen future career, either as talented athletes, as coaches or as officials. Sport may also be used as a vehicle for learning life skills, character, and/or diverting young people from anti-social or criminal behavior.

Children should have access to sport in a safe and enjoyable environment. Over the recent years, victims of all forms of violence in sports have started to have their voices heard and responded too. Previously there has been little questioning of the perception that sport is only a force for good for young people. Until the late 1990s/early 2000s very few sport organizations had put in place systems and structures to respond to complaints about the behavior of adults or young people.

Due to research and evidence, we now know that sport does not always take place with a focus on children's rights in mind. Sometimes people fail to fully consider the risks to children, leading to organizational cultures that don't allow for the discussion of harm and abuse (Brackenridge, Kay & Rhind, 2012).

There are also some risks to children and young people which are unique to sport such as the increased risks of all forms of abuse to elite young athletes. Many sports for development programs are provided to extremely vulnerable children who may be affected by violence and abuse in their daily lives and for whom sport should be a safe haven. We seek to ensure that sport provision to these young people takes place in safe environments.

Bridge II Sports (BIIS) has been actively ensuring the safety of children from the inception of the organization. To that end, the Board has adopted the following Safeguards. You may notice that some of this has been blended in both the Media Policies, Employee Handbook, as well as the Athlete & Family Handbook.

This Child Safeguarding Policy is based on "Keeping Children Safe Child Safeguarding Standards; the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (and its optional protocols); the UN Statement for the Elimination of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation and all child-related UN conventions; the national child protection legislation of the United State and international good practice." ¹

¹ *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989; (<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>)*

Definitions

- Safeguarding refers to the actions we (used collectively) take to ensure **all** children are safe from harm when involved in our activities.
- Child refers to anyone under the age of 18.
- Child protection is a set of activities that are required for children who are at higher risk of/or are suffering harm/abuse.
- Abuse refers to the acts of commission or omission that lead to a child/young person experiencing harm.
- Harm refers to the physical injury, especially that which is deliberately inflicted on a child or young person.
- Exploitation refers to an act or acts committed through non-consensual abuse or exploitation of another person's sexuality for the purpose of sexual gratification, financial gain, personal benefit or advantage, or any other non-legitimate purpose.
- Negligent treatment means failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care that includes medical neglect, and the deprivation is not due to the lack of financial means of his or her parent, guardian, or other custodian.
- Emotional abuse is a form of abuse, characterized by a person subjecting, or exposing, another person to behavior that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) is a commercial transaction that involves the sexual exploitation of a child, such as the prostitution of children and child pornography. ... 'sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons.
- Violence refers to “forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse due to negligence or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse”.

Safeguards

Safeguards aim to outline the things that BIIS has put in place providing sport activities to children and young people. The Safeguards should be viewed as guidelines, which facilitate our journey towards safeguarding children rather than an end in themselves. These policies apply to visitors, consultants, Board members, and partners affiliated with Bridge II Sports.

The safeguards reflect relevant legislation, government guidance, existing child protection/safeguarding standards and best practice. They have been formed by research with a diverse range of perspectives. These Safeguards represent collective best practices at a point in time and will be subject to periodic review to ensure they reflect developments within safeguarding practice.

Working with children is an integral part of what we do at BIIS. It is imperative that we do our part in keeping children safe while on our watch. BIIS will ensure that it applies the highest standards in the recruitment and vetting policies of the organization. Candidates for all staff, board, and tier 1 volunteers are checked for their suitability for working with children and their understanding of safeguarding.

Background checks are an important part of our recruitment policy and cover all representatives within our employment relationship. Checking evidence of identity and the authenticity of qualifications, requesting self-declarations about previous convictions, and a minimum requirement of at least two references are carried out in all cases. All staff and coaches will receive child safeguarding training to help them understand why it is necessary to safeguard and protect children and to be fully aware of the procedures for reporting concerns. It is advised that BIIS staff are not alone with a child/young person as a practice. BIIS understands that sometimes it happens. BIIS staff must be mindful of those times and communicate with a BIIS Supervisor as the circumstances arise to validate the need and creating accountability.

Verification Process

BIIS ensures that all Board Members, Staff and Tier 1 Volunteers go through a process before becoming a leader and BIIS team member, or coach in adapted sports. These include:

- Application Process
- Interview Process that is team based
- Reference Check
- Background Check
- 90 Day Trial period
- Photo Identification Badge

Staff and Volunteer Training

All Staff and Tier 1 volunteers are to be trained properly to maintain a high quality of programming for our community. Trainings will include:

- Darkness to Light – Child Abuse Prevention
- CPR & First Aid
- Positive Coaching – Coaching Best Practices
- Adaptive Sports – How to Use Adaptive Sporting Equipment, as needed
- BIIS Policies – Media Policy, Athlete/ Family Forms, Equipment Loan Forms, etc.
- Neon – Maintaining Programs and Website
- US Olympic Safe Sports
- Concussion Awareness Training
- PTSD/TBI Training
- Others as deemed appropriate

Sexual Assault/Abuse Protections – Child Safeguarding Procedures

North Carolina is a mandatory report state if child abuse is suspected. BIIS will receive disclosures from children with sensitivity. Darkness 2 Light practices will be followed for handling of any reports or observations. If a child or young person tells you, they are being or have been abused:

- Listen to and accept what the child or young person says but do not press for information;
- Let the child or young person know what you are going to do next and that you will let them know what happens;
- Do not investigate and do not inform, question, or confront the alleged abuser;
- Take the alleged abuse seriously;
- Carefully document in writing exactly what you heard (the facts), the date, who was present, etc.

All reports/observations will be treated seriously and with confidentiality. The priority will always be the safety and best interests of the child/young person. Identifying information about children will be shared on a “need to know” basis. Any staff who raise concerns of serious malpractice will be protected as far as possible from victimization or any other detrimental treatment if they come forward with serious concerns, if concerns are raised in good faith. Deliberate false allegations are a serious disciplinary offense and will be investigated.

The subject of the complaint (alleged perpetrator) and all witnesses must cooperate fully and openly with internal and statutory investigations and hearings. Their confidentiality will be protected and information which could identify them will be shared on a need to know basis.

If a report needs to be made, please contact NC Child Protective Services at (919) 527-6430. Their website is <https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/cps/>.

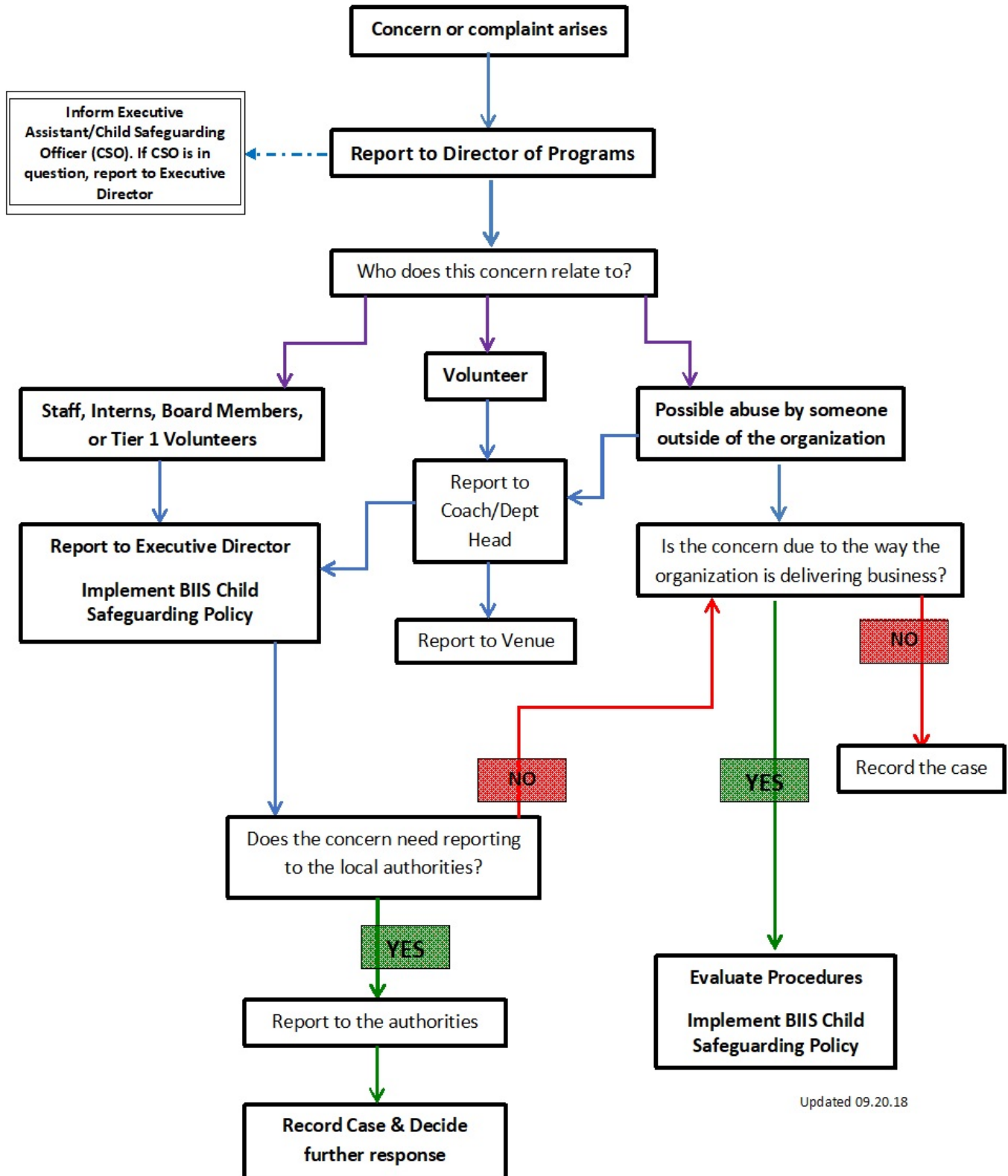
For the BIIS incident reporting flowchart, see page 5.

Monitoring and Evaluating

The Child Safeguarding Policies are reviewed as part of the On-Boarding practices for new staff.

- They are reviewed annually with staff at staff retreat in January.
- The Policy is reviewed annually by Governance Committee and Board in the first quarter of the year to verify and create accountability for the Program side of the organization.
- Parent meetings are established at the beginning of each season where all program policies, expectations, goal setting is relayed. How to report if there is a concern is also reviewed.
- Policies will be available to view and print from www.bridge2sports.org “About Us” tab.
- Volunteers are briefed on all policies during the scheduled volunteer training.
- Community partners will have information in packets that include our values, policies, and expectations regarding Safeguarding children. This document will include a statement whereby partners will be encouraged to abide by BIIS policy or create one of their own.
- Through continual awareness, designed in all programming areas and leadership, Bridge II Sports commitment to mitigating risks is a priority and part of the fabric of the organization.
- A risk assessment of all Bridge II Sports operations, programs and project activities will be conducted annually. Risk mitigation strategies will be developed, which minimize the risk to children, and incorporated into the design, delivery and evaluation of programs, and activities which involve or impact upon children.

BIIS Procedures for Responding to Child Safeguarding Concerns



Updated 09.20.18

Media Guidelines

In our use of information and visual images, both photographic stills and video, our main focus is to maintain respect and dignity in our portrayal of children, families, and communities. To that end, a Media Policy has been created.

BIIS Communication Guidelines for Media Personnel

By initialing each item, you understand what is being asked by Bridge II Sports to keep all participants safe. <i>You do not have to initial in the darkened spaces.</i>	Initials
1. WE WILL RESPECT THE DIGNITY OF THE SUBJECT.	
Special consideration will be given to photographs depicting individuals with disabilities in accurate context and with dignity.	
Wherever possible, we will explain to the subject the likely use of the images taken.	
We will not photograph individuals wearing red bands.	
We will not interview individuals wearing green bands.	
2. WE WILL NOT EXPLOIT THE SUBJECT.	
We will not manipulate the subject in a way that distorts the reality of the situation.	
We will never publish a minor participant's full name or contact information. Adult participants must give consent for use of full name (first, last).	
We will show people with disabilities as active and capable and will not use language or images that express pity or a 'less than' mentality.	
3. WE WILL MAINTAIN STANDARDS OF TASTE AND DECENCY.	
No images that are considered erotic, obscene, pornographic will ever be used.	
We will not make gratuitous use of images of people suffering.	
All written and oral accounts of programs and events will be made in Person First Language. (See policy for example)	

I have read the policies and protocol, and in a spirit of cooperation with Bridge II Sports and to honor the unique stories of the athletes and participants, I agree to adhere to the media requirements to the best of my ability.

Media Representative Printed Name	Media Outlet
Position/Title	Date of Interview Date of Publication
Email Address	Cell Phone Number

Names & Contact Information for Additional Representatives (i.e. cameramen, etc.)

Media Representative Signature _____ Date _____

For any questions about these policies and procedures or other media requests, please contact BIIS Marketing Manager at 1-866-880-2742 ext 3, or marketing@bridge2sports.org

For Internal Use Only:

Approved:	Badge Issued:	Badge #:	Badge Returned:

BIIS Policies and Protocol for Media

Bridge II Sports is a non-profit organization that creates opportunities for youth and adults with physical disabilities to play sports while developing confidence, character, self-esteem and tenacity.

Due to the nature of our organization and communities that we serve, our athletes and program participants have distinct stories, uncommon vulnerabilities, and are in a unique place in their life journey. A strong relationship with the media is important in sharing our stories – both the stories of individuals and of Bridge II Sports – therefore, shared respect for this uniqueness is expected. The following policies are required to honour the athletes and their stories with intention, respect, and safety.

For all media representatives in contact with BIIS participants, families and/or event(s):

- All media personnel must sign an agreement with BIIS outlining their understanding and adherence to these policies and protocols; agreements are effective for the event(s) listed on their respective forms.
- Once approved, all media personnel will be given a BIIS media identification badge, which must be displayed prominently always. These must be returned at the end of the event or interview.
- To be photographed or interviewed, **ALL** athletes must have given written & signed consent.

For all athletes and program participants (Youth & Adult):

- No athlete photographs or interviews without a written & signed consent form:
 - All persons under 18 years old must have form signed by a parent or legal guardian
 - All persons wishing to not be photographed and/or interviewed will be wearing a colored wristband. **No pictures = red band; No interviews = green band**
- All youth are considered by BIIS to be potentially high-risk for child predators.
- **Only one** of the following combinations listed below may be used to identify minor participants in any BIIS activities, including athletes, program participants, family members, observers, volunteers, etc.:
 - Participant's age and county of residence
 - First name and age
 - First name and state of residence
- Under **NO** circumstances should a minor participant's full name be included in any materials (print, social or online media) or any other media story.
- Adult participants must give consent for full name to be included in any materials, print, social, online media, or any other media story. Due to nature of their disability (ex. Traumatic Brain Injury, cognitive disability) some BIIS athletes may not be able to provide informed consent. Please be mindful of these athletes' rights and discuss any issues with BIIS staff.
- To ensure accuracy, interviewees may request and be granted the right to review and provide final approval of their story prior to printing or publishing.
- BIIS may request approval of "quotes" received from participants.
- Person First Language is a MUST for all interviews, publications, and interactions (see reverse)
 - **YES** – a youth basketball player who uses a wheelchair.
 - **NO** – wheelchair bound basketball player.
 - Our athletes are people first. Their disability does not define them.

Person-First Language

Person-First Language aims to avoid perceived and subconscious dehumanization when discussing people with disabilities and is sometimes referred to as a type of disability etiquette. Person-first language can also be applied to any group that is defined by a condition rather than as a people. For example: “people who live on the street” rather than “homeless”.

The basic idea is to use a sentence structure that names the **person first** and the condition second. Because English syntax normally places adjectives before nouns, it becomes necessary to insert relative clauses, replacing, e.g., “asthmatic person” with “a person who has asthma”. Furthermore, the use *to have* is favored over *to be*.

Examples of Person First Language

Person First Language	Unacceptable Language
People with disabilities	The handicapped or disabled
People with AIDS	AIDS victims/patients
Paul has a cognitive disability (diagnosis).	Paul is mentally retarded.
Kate has autism (or a diagnosis of...).	Kate is autistic.
Ryan has Down Syndrome (or a diagnosis of...).	Ryan is a Down's; a Down's person; mongoloid.
Sara has a learning disability (diagnosis).	Sara is learning disabled.
Mary is of short stature/a little person.	Mary is a dwarf/midget.
Bob has a physical disability (diagnosis).	Bob is a quadriplegic/is crippled.
Tom has a mental health condition.	Tom is emotionally disturbed/mentally ill.
Nora uses a wheelchair/mobility chair.	Nora is confined to/is wheelchair bound.
Steve receives special education services.	Steve is in special ed; He's a special education student.
Tonya has a developmental delay.	Tonya is developmentally delayed.
Children without disabilities or able-bodied	Normal/healthy/typical children
....communicates with her eyes/device/etc.	...is non-verbal
Congenital defect	Birth defect
Brain injury	Brain damage
Accessible parking, hotel room, etc.	Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc.
She needs or uses...	She has problems/special needs.

Bridge II Sports Style Guidelines

In an effort to maintain our brand and consistency we ask that you adhere to the following style guidelines:

Organization: Bridge II Sports (Bridge-space- capital i capital i- space-Sports)-pronounced Bridge to Sports

Website: www.bridge2sports.org or bridge2sports.org

When abbreviated (on social media or upon second mention in writing): BIIS

Do not use: Bridge 2 Sports; Bridge2Sports, B2S

In general: Valor Games Southeast

For the specific year: Valor Games Southeast (year) ex: Valor Games Southeast 2017

When abbreviated (on social media or upon second mention in writing): Valor Games SE (year); VGSE

Do not use: Valor Games, Southeast Valor Games, 2017 Valor Games, 2017 Valor Games Southeast

For use of Bridge II Sports logos please contact BIIS Marketing Manager, at 866-880-2742 or marketing@bridge2sports.org.

BIIS Social Media Policy

In order to best protect our participants (both youth and adult), we will follow the below protocol when using social media. All social media accounts are managed by BIIS full-time staff members. Currently, Bridge II Sports publishes information via the following platforms:

Bridge 2 Sports



ValorGamesSoutheast



Rules for Social Media use by staff:

- Always write in person first language.
- Always use correct grammar whenever possible.
- Any information posted to the accounts should be relevant to adaptive sports or the mission of Bridge II Sports.
- Never upload or post defamatory, obscene, abusive or harmful content.
 - Inform the Marketing Manager & Office Manager if this type of content is posted on any BIIS accounts
- Do not share any sensitive information of participants including:
 - Full name
 - Name in conjunction with city and state of residence or school attending
- Do not post personal information.
- Report suspicious activity to the Marketing Manager & Office Manager immediately.
- If you are posting about an event or program that Bridge II Sports has planned, and not posting from a BIIS account, tag @Bridge II Sports.
- All postings need to be in Person First Language
- All content is approved by BIIS Media Personnel prior to being published.

Athlete Input

BIIS has a Subcommittee of the Governance Committee that has former athletes and parents of past athletes, one Governance Committee member, and one Program staff who review the Parent Athlete Handbook Annually. This process begins teaching our athletes how Committee's work, learn Board structure, and have a voice in the procedures and policies over the programs we serve.

Guidelines to Personal Behavior

Bridge II Sports Personal Code of Ethics

It is the duty and obligation of Bridge II Sports affiliated programming administrators, directors, coaches and other personnel to ensure the following Code of Ethics is adhered to by all individuals who have an active role at BIIS.

In a continuing effort to promote safe, healthy and ethical communication, relationships and treatment of all BIIS athletes and personnel, all adults associated with programming must read, sign and submit this Code of Ethics before they are eligible to participate with BIIS.

1. All adult personnel including coaches, chaperones, assistant coaches, trainers, etc. affiliated with a BIIS youth or adult program must have an approved and current background check on file as per BIIS policy. It is intended that the term “all adult personnel” be all inclusive and not limited to only those categories identified above.
2. A head coach or assistant coach affiliated with a youth program must be an adult. This adult is defined as someone over the age of 18, and older in age by two years than the assigned team they are coaching.
3. If allowed by BIIS administration, an assistant coach who has not yet met the age of majority in the state of residence must be supervised by a head coach recognized by BIIS and must meet all applicable BIIS requirements. Individuals who are registered as youth players, and also have an interest in coaching, can appeal to BIIS administration regarding their coaching eligibility.
4. Responsibilities:
 - a. A head coach, or other equally qualified personnel, must be present at all practices and competitions. A head coach, adult personnel or registered chaperone must be present during team-supervised travel. This individual shall be responsible for the moral, legal and ethical well-being for each participant during team activities.
 - b. Coaches shall understand the unique power of a coach-athlete relationship. Coaches and all other personnel shall not exploit athletes and shall avoid any relationships which could compromise the integrity of the learning and participation process, impair their professional judgment and/or take advantage of a situation for their own personal gain or gratification.
 - c. All personnel must understand that all forms of sexual abuse, assault or harassment of a current or former athlete are unethical and illegal even when an athlete invites or consents to such behavior or involvement. Personnel shall not engage in sexual/romantic relationships with current athletes or other participants over whom there is/was authority. See B above.
 - d. All personnel shall ensure that all individuals have met all BIIS membership requirements prior to participation in any BIIS activity, team practice and/or competition.
 - e. All personnel may not participate in, require another individual to participate in, or condone any act considered to be illegal under federal, state or local laws and/or ordinances.

- f. All personnel shall strive to educate their athletes and personnel to respect, honor and adhere to the rules of the facility being used during practices, tournaments or events. In this regard, the rules of the facility shall have priority over the rules of BIIS.
- g. All personnel shall ensure that all activities are suitable for the age, experience and ability of their athletes.
- h. All personnel shall seek parent/guardian input when making decisions regarding an injured athlete's ability to continue training or playing.
- i. All personnel shall, while serving in a professional capacity, avoid any drug, tobacco or alcohol use while in the presence of athletes.
- j. All personnel shall not supply or condone the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, vaping, fireworks, ammunition, firearms, knives or any item or material that can be used as a weapon, to any of the participants or athletes and shall report any athlete using or in the possession of the same.
- k. All personnel shall not allow, encourage, condone or require any behavior that threatens an athlete's amateur status or school and/or collegiate eligibility.
- l. All personnel shall maintain all relationships with other personnel on a professional and confidential basis.
- m. All personnel must be positive role models. This includes being courteous, respectful and polite to players, parents, other coaches, directors, event personnel, and officials.
- n. All personnel will not engage in any physical, verbal or emotional harassment, abusive words or actions, or coercion of current and/or former athletes.
- o. All personnel will immediately report any suspected case of illegal activity, abuse, assault, harassment, or ethical violations of this personnel code of ethics to the appropriate authorities, including BIIS Administrators. Any violation of this Code may result in sanctions, or loss of eligibility, being issued against the organization, team representative, the individual(s)/family and the team involved.
- p. North Carolina state law, NCGS 7B-301(b), states that all personnel are mandatory reporters and have a duty to report all forms of abuse or illegal activity.
- q. As reports are investigated, BIIS is committed to sensitivity (sharing on a "need to know basis").
- r. As reports are investigated, BIIS is committed to completing the review process in a timely manner.
- s. BIIS is committed to following the "child safeguarding procedures" as outlined on page 5

I acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to abide by the statements in this Code of Ethics.

Applicant Printed Name

Date

Applicant Signature