

# 2015-2016 Safe Sport Program Goals

USA Swimming Safe Sport enters its sixth year in 2015-2016. Since our inception in 2010, we have operated from the foundation that effective Safe Sport programming must be leadership driven and locally rooted. Through our first five years, much of the effort has been centralized to support the development of a program at the national level that could be successfully replicated and broadly distributed and the personnel infrastructure by which to do that.

2015 marks an exciting shift in our focus from program development to local level engagement. It is our belief that the best child protection efforts happen every day, at the club level, and are embedded in the culture of those clubs. USA Swimming strives to increase the number of clubs who organically engage in Safe Sport efforts through education and awareness raising.

## **Where We Are Going**

Our 2015-2016 Safe Sport efforts will be wholly focused on the goal to **INCREASE LOCAL LEVEL ENGAGEMENT**.

We believe we can raise awareness for Safe Sport and increase local level engagement through three strategies:

1. **To increase in number and empower the existing Safe Sport Champions:** Empower our volunteer leadership – Safe Sport’s Champions - at all levels of the organization. Forthcoming initiatives include:
  - a. Solidify the volunteer leadership infrastructure of Safe Sport. Activate committee to provide leadership and support to Zone and LSC Chairs. Identify, plan, and execute regular communication points during the year with volunteer community.
  - b. Create an LSC Chairs Support Subcommittee to identify, plan, and execute regular training opportunities and communication points with volunteer community.
  - c. Name and activate Safe Sport Zone Chairs.
  - d. Develop onboarding process for new LSC Safe Sport Chairs.
  - e. Publish job description for Club Safe Sport Coordinator.
  - f. Launch Safe Sport Athlete Fellowship Program to identify, engage, and train athlete leaders.
2. **To encourage and support club leadership:** Create and promote tools for clubs to create a positive sport culture and support their implementation and continued use. Forthcoming initiatives include:
  - a. Encourage, support, and promote LSC Safe Sport Chair initiatives to encourage engagement with Safe Sport at the club level. Examples of LSC initiatives available at [www.usaswimming.org/protect](http://www.usaswimming.org/protect).
  - b. Launch Safe Sport Self-Assessment for a club to gauge its existing efforts with Safe Sport and provide support and guidance to increase engagement.
  - c. Incentivize clubs to engage with Safe Sport through Safe Sport Certified Club Program.
  - d. Use 2016 LSC Chairs Workshop to train LSC Chairs to help clubs to achieve Safe Sport Certified Club status.
  - e. Rewrite existing Safe Sport Handbook as a guide to help clubs to achieve Safe Sport Certified Club status.
  - f. Design new Safe Sport Continuing Education Library to replace the current Athlete Protection Training requirement during 2015-2016 for launch in the summer of 2017.
3. **To activate swim meets as parent engagement opportunities:** Capitalize on swim meets that bring together all swimming community constituents and spread the word of Safe Sport. Forthcoming initiatives include:
  - a. Activate a Safe Sport booth at the US Olympic Trials Aquazone with the goal of raising awareness for Safe Sport through brand recognition.
  - b. Develop and distribute promotional materials for use at swim meets: (1) meet announcer scripts; (2) branded posters; (3) heat sheet ads; (4) parent tip cards.
  - c. Develop Swim Meet Tabling Kit for duplication or purchase by LSCs or clubs.

All resources described above and additional Safe Sport resources are/will be available at [www.usaswimming.org/toolkit](http://www.usaswimming.org/toolkit).



## **Vieth Report Progress Update**

November 2015

### **INTRODUCTION**

In 2013, USA Swimming commissioned Victor Vieth, Executive Director of the National Child Protection Training Center, to conduct a comprehensive assessment of USA Swimming's Safe Sport Program. Vieth conducted the assessment from September 2013 to December 2013 and delivered his report ("Vieth Report") with 39 recommended actions to the USA Swimming Board of Directors in January 2014. Then-President Bruce Stratton formed the Safe Sport Program Review Task Force to evaluate and prioritize the recommendations and produce a plan for implementation.

The Task Force approached its evaluation of the Vieth Report based on the following considerations:

1. USA Swimming must develop and implement strategies, policies, procedures and programs that can operate and thrive with consideration for the requirements of and restrictions imposed by the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act.
2. USA Swimming recognizes the burden it places on its members when it imposes requirements and the Task Force sought to identify implementation strategies that incentivize rather than mandate.
3. USA Swimming is a member organization and retains jurisdiction over its members. It has little jurisdiction or enforcement mechanism to implore non-members to complete membership requirements.
4. Development and implementation of the strategies, policies, procedures and programs will take a significant amount of time. USA Swimming has not made a one, two, or five year commitment to Safe Sport, but rather a long-term organizational commitment to build and nurture a culture of Safe Sport in the swimming community.

The Vieth Report outlined thirty-nine specific recommendations for action by USA Swimming. During the Task Force's initial review, additional recommendations and items categorized as "sub-recommendations" were identified adding to the recommendations. The Task Force identified a grand total of fifty-four items to be evaluated.

### **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PROGRESS**

The Task Force returned a report to the Board of Directors in May 2014 with a four-phased implementation plan for the 54 Vieth Report recommendations. Of the 54 items, the Task Force recommended implementation for 52 items, agreed with the Vieth Report not to implement one item (SS4), and did not recommend implementation for one item (RRR2).

Since that time, the Safe Sport Committee and headquarters staff have been working diligently to follow the plan set forth for them. This document is a progress update on the implementation of the Vieth Report recommendations over the last eighteen months.

- ✓ Twenty-one items out of the fifty-two recommended for implementation have been successfully integrated in to the Safe Sport Program and Phase One has been completed in full.
- ✓ The Committee and staff are currently working on the implementation of sixteen out of the remaining twenty-six items recommended for adoption by USA Swimming.

- ✓ Since the Task Force's report was submitted, three items (OT1, OT6, OT7) have been identified as tasks best suited for the USOC's Center for Safe Sport when it opens (expected mid-2016).

### Implementation: Complete

The Safe Sport Committee and staff have implemented the Vieth Report recommendations through a series of strategies. Our progress report is organized by strategy with the relevant Vieth recommendation accomplished through that strategy noted therein:

#### Implementation Strategy: Legislation

Description:	The USA Swimming Board of Directors submitted three legislative proposals to the 2014 House of Delegates to implement Vieth Report recommendations RRR1, RRR3, and RRR7. All three proposals passed and the 2015 Rulebook reflects the new legislation (Articles 307.1, 307.2, and 405.2.3).
Implementation Date	September 2014
Relevant Vieth Report Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RRR1 - Extend whistleblower protection to coaches or others who make a good faith report of physical abuse or psychological abuse/bullying.</li> <li>• RRR3 - Create a rebuttal presumption clause that further protects coaches or other reports from retaliation.</li> <li>• RRR7 - Disband or limit the coaches' panel to evaluating whether or not a coaches' conduct is acceptable within the sport.</li> </ul>

#### Implementation Strategy: SwimAssist

Description:	USA Swimming's SwimAssist program offers financial assistance to any current or former member of USA Swimming who has suffered harm perpetrated by an individual who at the time of the harm was (1) a member of USA Swimming and (2) participating in the activities of USA Swimming. SwimAssist has served five current or former members since its inception.
Implementation Date	January 2015
Relevant Vieth Report Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OT4 – Establish and maintain a victim's assistance fund.</li> </ul>

#### Implementation Strategy: SwimStaffSelect

Description:	SwimStaffSelect is a free online hiring tool for USA Swimming's member coaches and clubs developed in partnership with the Nonprofit Risk Management Center. Users can create job descriptions, applications and postings, manage submitted resumes and develop scripts for interviews and reference checks using free templates and education on responsible hiring practices.
Implementation Date	July 2015
Relevant Vieth Report Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SS1 - Recommend to clubs additional pre-employment screening tools of a written application, personal interview and written acknowledgement of the code of conduct pertaining to child protection.</li> <li>• SS2 - Develop materials to assist clubs in the hiring process.</li> </ul>

#### Implementation Strategy: Task Force Work

Description:	In September 2014, then-President Stratton appointed a Task Force to create guidelines for what information should be released to whom for cases that are heard by the National Board of Review. The Task Force completed its work from October 2014 to January 2015 including a nine-month trial period for its recommended guidelines. It delivered its final report to the BOD at the September 2015 meeting. Safe Sport staff
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	has since incorporated the guidelines for document distribution into its case management efforts.
Implementation Date	September 2015
Relevant Vieth Report Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>OT5 (OT5A-OT5D) - Task force regarding greater access to files and NBOR decisions, as well as sharing information about banned, suspended or flagged members with other youth serving organizations.</li> </ul>

### Implementation Strategy: Safe Sport Internal Program Manual

Description:	In 2013, Safe Sport Staff created an Internal Complaints Manual to memorialize its established case management practices. The Safe Sport Program Review Task Force recognized that this document could be expanded into a Safe Sport Program Manual where policies and practices across the Safe Sport Program could be memorialized to increase transparency and program integrity. The following Vieth Report recommendations have been incorporated in to Safe Sport staff practices and are now included in the expanded Program Manual.
Implementation Date	November 2015
Relevant Vieth Report Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ET9 - Constantly re-evaluate training as research expands.</li> <li>ET9A – Monitor literature, attend national child abuse conferences and regularly have training and other aspects of the program reviewed by those well versed in the literature.</li> <li>ET9B – Require ongoing training for the investigators, attorneys, and others within USA Swimming who respond to any aspect of child maltreatment.</li> <li>MS3 - Develop checks and balances of quality control measure for the informal resolution process.</li> <li>MS3A - Develop written criteria for screening a case into the informal resolution process.</li> <li>MS3B - Randomly selected number of cases resolved through informal resolution should be reviewed by an external expert on child maltreatment.</li> <li>RRR4 - If a report concerns recent abuse such that most witnesses are in one location, consider the possibility of the investigator traveling to the community and conducting in-person interviews.</li> <li>RRR5 - If the crime scene is available and accessible to the investigator, have it photographed.</li> <li>GF2 - Facilitate connections between local clubs and community child protection organizations that may assist in evaluating risks unique to a particular club.</li> <li>GF3 - Make a concerted effort to engage survivors in every major safe sport initiative.</li> </ul>

### Implementation: In Progress

The following strategies are currently in progress by the Safe Sport Committee and staff:

### Implementation Strategy: Task Force Work

Description:	In February 2015, President Sheehan appointed a Task Force to create guidelines for evidentiary standards in National Board of Review cases. The Task Force completed its work from February to November 2015 and submitted its final report to the BOD at the November 2015 meeting. Implementation of proposed standards is pending feedback and approval from the BOD.
Relevant Vieth Report Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RRR10 - Establish “reliable hearsay” standards that may allow the organization to ban coaches we believe has abused a child or violated the code of conduct.</li> </ul>

### Implementation Strategy: Survivor Resources

Description:	Safe Sport staff is currently developing print and online resources for individuals who are participating in the National Board of Review process as a survivor or witness. These materials will outline the NBOR process, detail what to expect, and answer any questions that come up frequently during case management. Materials will be informed by the past experience of survivors and witnesses who have been through the NBOR process as well as existing research regarding the effects of participating in a hearing or other disciplinary process.
Relevant Vieth Report Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RRR8 - Develop materials that may assist an abused athlete and his or her family in cooperating with an investigator or NBOR hearing.</li><li>• RRR9 - Research the effects of testifying before the NBOR and utilize this research in responding to cases in which a victim or family is uncooperative.</li></ul>

### Implementation Strategy: Safe Sport Certified Club Program

Description:	The Safe Sport Program Review Task Force recommended that USA Swimming create a "Safe Sport Certified Club" program to motivate and incentivize coaches, teams, athletes and parents to embrace and participate in the Safe Sport Training and enhance the awareness of the Safe Sport Program. A subcommittee of the Safe Sport Committee has been working on the development of required criteria for clubs to achieve Safe Sport Certified status for the last twelve months. Program launch is planned for August 2016 and LSC Safe Sport Chairs will be trained to assist the clubs in their respective LSC with certification.
Relevant Vieth Report Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ET1 - Require children who are athlete members 12-18 to take the Safe Sport training.</li><li>• ET3 - Require parents to take Safe Sport training.</li><li>• GF1 - Set a goal of a safe sport coordinator in every club – and strive to meet this in 5 years.</li></ul>

### Implementation Strategy: Safe Sport Training Library

Description:	In 2010, USA Swimming passed the Athlete Protection Training membership requirement, mandating online abuse prevention training for all non-athlete members renewed every two years. The Safe Sport Program recognizes the need to provide more education across a broader number of topics in the future. Staff is currently in development of a "Safe Sport Training Library" which will be an online collection of courses on Safe Sport related topics (eg. bullying, travel, electronic communication). Starting with the 2017-2019 APT renewal cycle, non-athlete members will be able to choose the online courses that would best serve their needs as a coach, official, or other volunteer to complete their APT certification requirement. Program launch is planned for August 2017.
Relevant Vieth Report Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ET2 - Develop personal safety materials for younger children – and require parents to review them with all younger athletes.</li><li>• ET5 - Strengthen the physical abuse section of the Safe Sport training.</li><li>• ET6 (ET6A-ET6D) - Incorporate ACE Research into Safe Sport training.</li><li>• ET7 - Develop training and written materials pertaining to juvenile sexual behaviors and offenses (peer to peer).</li><li>• ET8 - Incorporate resilience research into Safe Sport training.</li><li>• MS1 - Continually reinforce the rationale behind the importance of the monitoring and supervision rules.</li></ul>

Vieth Report Executive Summary  
Safe Sport Program Review Task Force Report