

# **BEAT THE STREETS PHILADELPHIA**

## **Policies and Procedures on Abuse**

(Revised: June, 2018)

### **PURPOSE**

Beat the Streets Philadelphia (BTSP) fosters the holistic development of at risk youth through mentoring, academic support, and athletics. As a youth development nonprofit organization, BTSP is committed to the safety and welfare of its student athletes. Accordingly, BTSP prohibits any type of abuse and/or conduct that directly or indirectly injures the youth it serves. This includes physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse.

To this end, BTSP requires all staff, coaches, mentors, and volunteers to adhere to its policies and guidelines that are set in place to ensure the safety of BTSP participants. Failure to abide by BTSP policies and procedures can lead to suspension, or termination of employment.

### **DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

1. **PHYSICAL ABUSE:** Physical abuse of a child is defined as the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in – or has a high likelihood of resulting in – harm for the child’s health, survival, development or dignity. This includes hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning and suffocating.
2. **SEXUAL ABUSE:** Sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of a child in sexual activity that s/he does not fully comprehend, as a minor is unable to give consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Children can be sexually abused by both adults and other children who are – by virtue of their age or stage of development – in a position of responsibility, trust, or power over the minor victim.
3. **EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL:** Emotional and psychological abuse involves both isolated incidents, as well as a pattern of failure over time to provide a developmentally appropriate and supportive environment. Acts in this category may have a high probability of damaging the child’s physical or mental health, or its physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Abuse of this type includes: the restriction of movement; patterns of verbal belittling, blaming, threatening, frightening, discriminating against or ridiculing; and other non-physical forms of rejection or hostile treatment.

## ABUSE PREVENTION PROCEDURES

1. **CLEARANCES:** All BTSP staff, coaches, or volunteers are required to provide Child Abuse Clearances and Criminal Background Checks prior to participating at any BTSP program. Updated clearances are required every two years. Please refer to the BTSP policy on [Background Checks / Child Abuse Clearances](#).
2. **TRANSPORTATION:** BTSP staff and coaches are not permitted to travel alone in a vehicle with student athletes. There must always be at least one other adult present, or multiple student athletes present at all times.
3. **PRIVATE LESSONS:** BTSP does not permit staff or coaches to conduct private one-on-one lessons with participants. Coaches are expected to teach technique in a team or small group setting, with multiple youth and at least one other adult present.
4. **COMMUNICATION:** BTSP staff and coaches are encouraged to avoid private text conversations and social media communications with student athletes. Staff and coaches are also strongly advised to conduct private conversations within the view of others, as opposed to an enclosed room, which could include but is not limited to locker rooms, bathrooms, offices.
5. **OVERNIGHT TRAVEL:** BTSP often participates in competitions that require travel and overnight lodging. Youth are expected to be paired up with other participants of the same gender and age group. Coaches and chaperones are not permitted to ever share a room with a student athlete unless said chaperone is the youth's legal guardian.

## RESPONDING TO AN ALLEGATION

1. **MANDATORY REPORTING:** Any adult working or volunteering with minors is considered a mandatory reporter by PA State Law, which means that any incident, allegation, or suspicion of abuse of a BTSP program participant must be immediately reported to Childline and then to BTSP management as part of its incident management procedure. In order to protect BTSP student athletes, all staff, coaches, mentors, and volunteers are required to understand their responsibility as a mandatory reporter, and have contact information for CHILDLINE readily available. Protecting BTSP student athletes is everyone's responsibility, and failure to report may result in suspension or termination as a BTSP participant, in addition to consequences determined by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare.
2. **INVESTIGATION:** Upon receipt of an incident management report, the alleged perpetrator will be notified of their suspension from the program without financial compensation. An immediate, objective, and thorough internal investigation will be conducted to verify the facts of the allegation. If the investigation support the allegations, BTSP will immediately notify appropriate law enforcement authorities of the documented allegation. In such cases, the alleged perpetrator will be terminated from the organization. If the verified facts do not support the allegation, the alleged perpetrator may or may not be reinstated to their former position. BTSP holds the right to disallow reinstatement if the presence of the alleged offender is considered detrimental to the reputation of the organization or harmful to BTSP student athletes.

## **ORIENTATION**

BTSP staff, coaches, mentors, and volunteers are all expected to thoroughly review and familiarize themselves with the information provided in this policy & procedure document before participating in any BTSP program activities. This document is made available on the BTSP website, as well as provided during the BTSP orientation process.