

FIRST® Youth Protection Program Guide



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About *FIRST*®

FIRST® is a global 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that prepares young people for the future through a suite of welcoming, team-based robotics programs for children in grades K-12 (ages 5-18) that build skills and resilience. Programs are suitable for schools or structured afterschool activities.

FIRST Vision, Mission, and Impact

OUR VISION is to transform our culture by creating a world where science and technology are celebrated and where young people dream of becoming science and technology leaders.

OUR MISSION is to provide life-changing robotics programs that give young people the skills, confidence, and resilience to build a better world.

OUR PURPOSE is to prepare the young people of today for the world of tomorrow.

Commitment to Youth Protection

FIRST is committed to creating an environment in which all participants can grow, learn, and have fun with minimal risk of injury or harm. *FIRST* strives to inform everyone involved in its programs of its *FIRST* Youth Protection Program (YPP) and related resources and provide assistance in meeting its standards. *FIRST* maintains a YPP for the purpose of fulfilling its commitment to protecting youth.

FIRST Core Values

- **Discovery:** We explore new skills and ideas.
- **Innovation:** We use creativity and persistence to solve problems.
- **Impact:** We apply what we learn to improve our world.
- **Inclusion:** We respect each other and embrace our differences.
- **Teamwork:** We are stronger when we work together.
- **Fun:** We enjoy and celebrate what we do!



Table of Contents

Purpose and Strategy 5

Fundamentals of the *FIRST* Youth Protection Program 7
Supervision of program activities. 7
Openness. 7
Clear lines of communication, authority, and decision-making. 7
Trust, dignity, and respect. 7
Collaboration and cooperation. 7
Regular review. 7

Youth Protection Principles 8
Child Abuse Terminology and other Definitions 8
Key Youth Protection Definitions 9
***FIRST* Code of Conduct** **11**
Violations and Reporting Expectations 12
Distinction between *FIRST* Code of Conduct and Youth Protection Concerns 12
Appropriate Adult-Youth Interactions and Boundaries 13

Youth Protection Clearance (YPP Clearance) 16
YPP Clearance Components 16
YPP Clearance Defined 16

Reporting Concerns and Response Requirements 18
Reporting Concerns 18
What Should Be Reported? 18
Responding to Disclosure of Abuse 19
Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect 19
Mandated Reporting 19
Other Safety Concerns 19
Mental Health and Well-Being 20
Understanding the Scope of Youth Protection 21
Reporting Concerns to *FIRST* 21
What Happens After a Report is Submitted? 21
Confidentiality and Non-Retaliation 22
Reporting Medical Incidents 22

Roles and Youth Protection Responsibilities 23
Role Definitions 23

Appendix A: Youth Protection Case Process 26
Youth Protection Case Process 26

Appendix B: Examples of Prohibited Conduct and Boundary Violations 31
Abuse, Endangerment, and Explicit Misconduct (Prohibited Conduct) 31
Grooming and Exploitative Behaviors (Prohibited Conduct) 31
Boundary Violations (Primary Prevention Focus) 31
Non-Program-Related Interactions 32
Secrecy and Concealment 32
Misuse of Position or Authority 32
Event and Travel-Related Risks 32
Digital and Online Conduct Risks 32
Peer-to-Peer Misconduct (Youth-to-Youth) 32
Failure to Follow Youth Protection Requirements 33
Patterns and Escalation 33
When to Report 33

Appendix C: Safety Requirements for Team Activities 34
Safety Requirements for Team Activities 34

Appendix D: Best Practices for Online Communication Platforms and Digital Interaction 36
Purpose 36

Appendix E: Team Travel and Overnight Activities 39
Local Travel to Team Activities 39
Travel to Team Activities Away from Home and/or Overnight 39
Hosting School or Organization Requirements and State Regulations 41

Appendix F: Event Safety and Operations 42
Safety at *FIRST* Events 42

Appendix G: Guidelines for Parents/Guardians 45
Get Involved 45
Understand Youth Safety in *FIRST*® 45
Recognizing Signs of Concern 45
Responding to Disclosures and Other Signs of Abuse 46

Appendix H: Youth Protection and Safeguarding Checklist for Global Partners 47
Safe Recruitment and Screening of Adults Working with Youth 47
Mandatory Youth Protection Training 47
Policies and Reporting Mechanisms 47
Reporting and Incident Response 48
Child-Centered Practices 48
Mental Health and Wellbeing Support 48
Local Adaptation and Accountability 48

Appendix I: Youth Protection Contacts and Agencies 49
FIRST® Youth Protection Contact 49
Mental Health and Crisis Support 49
Child Safety and Protection Resources 49
Canada – Provincial and Territorial Child Protection Resources 50
International Child Protection Resources 50
Important 50

Purpose and Strategy

The purpose of the *FIRST* Youth Protection Program (YPP) is to provide coaches, mentors, event volunteers, employees, Program Delivery Partners, teachers, team members, parents, guardians of team members, and others working with *FIRST* programs with information, guidelines, and procedures to create safe environments for *FIRST* participants.

The *FIRST* YPP establishes minimum required standards and recommended best practices for youth protection across *FIRST* events and team-based activities. This includes in-person and virtual interactions, as well as all forms of communication with youth participants, including texting, email, messaging apps, digital platforms, and social media.

Adults working in *FIRST* programs must be knowledgeable of the standards set by *FIRST* YPP, as well as those set by the school or organization hosting their team. *FIRST* expects all teams in the United States and Canada to adhere to all provisions of the *FIRST* YPP. This expectation applies to all adults who interact with, supervise, or have access to youth participants, whether directly or indirectly, including all adults rostered with a team as well as any other adults who regularly interact with youth participants.

FIRST also expects that the standards set forth in the *FIRST* YPP be applied outside of the United States and Canada to the extent possible based on local customs, laws, and regulations. At a minimum, adults in *FIRST* programs must comply with local regulations regarding youth protection, which may include criminal background checks and mandatory child abuse prevention training. Where local laws or regulations exceed *FIRST* standards, the more protective standard must be followed.

Many schools and organizations hosting *FIRST* programs already have youth protection programs in place. Teams operating within schools, universities, or other host organizations must comply with both the host organization's safeguarding policies and the *FIRST* YPP. When requirements differ, teams are expected to follow the standard that provides the greatest level of protection for youth. Elements labeled as required are mandatory in the United States and Canada and may not be waived without written approval of *FIRST* Youth Protection.

The purchase and use of a *FIRST* Classroom Bundle curriculum, when implemented solely as classroom-based instruction and not as a registered *FIRST* team, falls outside the scope of the *FIRST* YPP. In these cases, youth protection responsibilities remain with the purchasing school, organization, or educational entity. If a Class Pack purchaser creates one or more registered *FIRST* teams, those teams and all rostered adults working with them must comply with applicable *FIRST* YPP requirements for coaches, mentors, and volunteers.



The *FIRST* YPP addresses a wide spectrum of safety risks. While many safety risks can be readily identified and remedied, others may be less obvious or not easily understood. *FIRST* participants, whether they are children or adults, may not be able to identify all safety risks, including potential abusers. However, by providing *FIRST* participants, parents, and guardians with information that raises their awareness of the risks of child abuse, and by setting standards of behavior that can prevent child abuse, *FIRST* gives its participants the resources necessary to significantly reduce the chances of harm.

Adhering to the following requirements and best practices supports all team members in having a safe and rewarding experience while participating in *FIRST*:

- Every team must have two lead coaches who are required to obtain Youth Protection Program (YPP) Clearance. YPP Clearance includes completion of applicable YPP screening requirements, annual *FIRST* YPP training, and acknowledgment of *FIRST* YPP policies.
- Every team must have two registered lead coaches. It is recommended for at least one lead coach to be 25 years of age or older and the second lead coach must be at least 21 years of age.
- All adults regularly interacting with youth participants must be rostered and are required to obtain YPP Clearance.
- Everyone regularly interacting with youth participants understands and can discuss the ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct in age-appropriate terms.
- Everyone working with a team understands acceptable boundaries and behaviors, as well as the actions necessary to address inappropriate behaviors.
- Parents and guardians are aware of, and to the extent possible, involved in their child's team's activities.
- Team activities should be open to observation by team members' parents and guardians whenever possible.
- *FIRST* advises that alumni wait a minimum of 4 years after high school graduation to return to their former team as a mentor or coach.

Adherence to the *FIRST* YPP requirements and best practices will significantly reduce the safety risks for all program participants and adult supporters.

Fundamentals of the *FIRST* Youth Protection Program

Supervision of program activities.

FIRST provides guidance for its volunteers – coaches, mentors and event volunteers – to recognize situations that may pose any threat to youth participant safety, and to take the actions necessary to prevent and report injuries.

Openness.

FIRST maintains a culture where concerns about the safety of team members can be raised and addressed, and where the involvement of team members' parents and guardians in enhancing program safety is encouraged and highly valued.

Clear lines of communication, authority, and decision-making.

FIRST has well-defined procedures to ensure youth protection issues are promptly and effectively reported and addressed.

Trust, dignity, and respect.

FIRST takes all disclosures and indications of risk seriously, while honoring every individual's right to privacy.

Collaboration and cooperation.

FIRST works with other organizations to address safety risks including child protection, law enforcement, hosting organizations, and legal counsel.

Regular review.

FIRST assesses the effectiveness of *FIRST* Youth Protection policies and makes improvements, if warranted.



Youth Protection Principles

Child Abuse Terminology and other Definitions

CHILD/YOUTH DEFINED

For purposes of the *FIRST* Youth Protection Program, a "child" is defined as any person under age 18 or who is registered as a youth participant. An "adult" is anyone 18 or older who is not registered as a youth participant. For the purposes of this guide, child, youth, student, team member, and youth participant may be used interchangeably to refer to individuals participating in *FIRST* programs who are under the age of 18, or who are registered as youth participants.

CHILD ABUSE

The majority of reported acts of child abuse are committed by someone the child is related to or knows and trusts. The fact that a parent, guardian, or relative of a team member is working with the team in no way precludes the possibility of them engaging in abusive behavior. Individuals who seek to abuse or exploit children frequently attempt to gain access to children through youth serving organizations. Such individuals may use manipulation, boundary testing, or gradual normalization of inappropriate behavior to gain trust and reduce the likelihood of detection. These behaviors may occur over time and are often difficult to recognize without clear standards and awareness. The *FIRST* YPP is designed to reduce risk by establishing clear behavioral expectations, supervision requirements, and reporting mechanisms.

Child Neglect

Child neglect is the failure of a caregiver to provide essential needs (food, shelter, supervision, medical care, educational, or emotional support) resulting in actual or potential harm, marking it the most common form of mistreatment.

Child Emotional Abuse

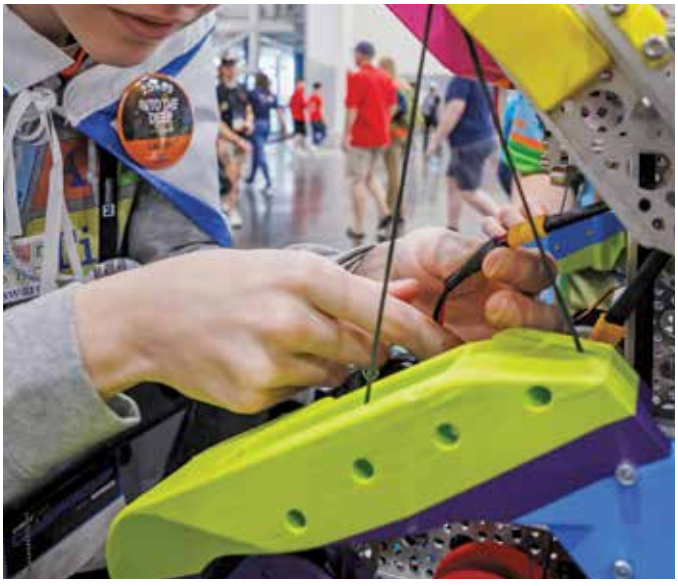
Emotional abuse is behavior toward a child that is demeaning or disrespectful. Examples include verbal threats, social isolation, intimidation, unreasonable demands, or the intentional damaging of a child's self-esteem. Emotional abuse may occur in person or through digital or online interactions and may be ongoing or episodic in nature.

Child Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is defined as the non-accidental use of physical force against a child in such a way that the child either sustains bodily injury or is at risk of bodily injury, however slight. This may include hitting, shaking, pushing, or other actions that cause or threaten physical harm.

Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is defined as any form of sexualized interaction involving a child and a more powerful individual (age, size, knowledge). Child sexual abuse may occur through inappropriate physical contact, as well as through behaviors that do not involve actual physical contact, for example, inviting a child to view pornography. Experts estimate that 30 to 50 percent of all acts of child sexual abuse are committed by children under 18 victimizing a younger, smaller, or less able child. Sexual abuse may occur in person or through electronic or digital means.



Grooming

Grooming refers to a pattern of behavior used by an individual to build trust, emotional connection, or dependency with a child, the child's family, or a group of children for the purpose of exploitation or abuse. Grooming behaviors may include boundary testing, favoritism, secrecy, isolation, gift-giving, or gradually increasing inappropriate behavior. Grooming may occur over time and is often difficult to identify without clear expectations and oversight.

Peer to Peer Misconduct

Peer-to-peer misconduct refers to harmful behavior between youth participants. This may include bullying, harassment, hazing, sexual misconduct, intimidation, or exploitation. Peer-to-peer misconduct may involve differences in age, size, maturity, or social power and may occur in person or through digital platforms.

Retaliation

Retaliation is any adverse action taken against an individual for reporting a youth protection concern, participating in a Youth Protection review, or supporting another person who has raised a concern. Retaliation may include intimidation, exclusion, harassment, threats, or negative consequences related to team participation or roles. Retaliation is prohibited and may be treated as a separate Youth Protection concern.



Key Youth Protection Definitions

REGULAR INTERACTION

"Regular interaction" refers to ongoing, repeated, or meaningful engagement with youth participants, whether in-person, virtual, or through communication platforms.

An adult may be considered to have regular interaction with youth if they:

- Attend or participate in multiple team meetings, events, or activities.
- Provide instruction, mentoring, supervision, or support to youth participants.
- Communicate directly with youth participants (e.g., email, messaging, social platforms).
- Have access to youth participants in a manner that could influence their experience.

Regular interaction is determined based on the level of access and engagement, not frequency alone.

SUPERVISION

"Supervision" means active oversight by an adult who has met Youth Protection requirements. The adult must be:

- Aware of the interaction.
- Able to observe the interaction (directly or indirectly).
- Able to intervene if necessary.

Supervision requires more than general presence and must be sufficient to ensure that interactions remain appropriate and within Youth Protection expectations.

FIRST prohibits unsupervised interactions. Youth Protection requirements are designed to minimize or eliminate such situations.

FIRST Program activities taking place in a classroom, as part of the regular school session, should follow the school's policy regarding adult supervision. These teams may be able to operate with only one Youth Protection cleared adult supervising if in accordance with school policies.

OBSERVABLE AND INTERRUPTIBLE

"Observable and interruptible" is the standard for appropriate adult-youth interactions.

Observable means interactions can be seen, monitored, or accessed by others (e.g., in open spaces, group settings, or transparent communication channels).

Interruptible means another adult can easily and appropriately enter, supervise, or stop the interaction. Interactions that are not observable and interruptible may increase risk and should be avoided.

Examples include:

- Meeting in open or shared spaces.
- Copying another adult or parent on communications.
- Using platforms that allow visibility to multiple participants.

The preferred supervision model is that interactions remain observable and interruptible. Whenever possible, at least two responsible adults should be aware of and available to observe youth activities.

ROSTERED ADULT

A "rostered adult" is an individual who is formally registered with a *FIRST* team in an official role and has been identified as part of the team.



FIRST Code of Conduct

FIRST expects all adults and youth participating in its programs to conduct themselves in accordance with standards of behavior that protect the safety and wellbeing of every team member. Adults should keep the best interests of youth participants front of mind and remember that they are role models for the students participating in our programs.

This *FIRST* Code of Conduct applies to all *FIRST* programs, events, and activities, whether in-season or off-season, including any team-organized or affiliated activities where participants are representing or engaged in *FIRST* related activities.

The *FIRST* Code of Conduct also governs behaviors that may not rise to the level of a youth safety concern but are inconsistent with ***FIRST*** Core Values and *Gracious Professionalism*® and therefore are prohibited.

All participants in *FIRST* programs are expected to abide by the *FIRST* Code of Conduct:

- Exhibit *Gracious Professionalism* at all times. *Gracious Professionalism* is a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community. With *Gracious Professionalism*, fierce competition and mutual gain are not separate notions.
- Ensure the safety of all participants in *FIRST* activities. Threatening, intimidating, or demeaning behavior toward any participant, whether youth or adult, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.
- Refrain from any form of bullying, harassment, intimidation, use of profane or insulting language, or any actual or threatened violence.
- Adhere to all *FIRST* policies including the *FIRST* YPP.
- Report any unsafe behavior to event or local *FIRST* leadership.

In addition to the expectations above, adults working in *FIRST* programs are held to a higher standard of conduct due to their responsibility for youth safety. Adults are expected to:

- Create and maintain environments where team members can learn, have fun, and feel safe.
- Provide age-appropriate oversight by caring adults modeling integrity and respect.
- Apply their knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible approach.
- Encourage learning by doing, fostering cooperative learning, respectful collaboration.
- Support positive relationships among team members while consistently observing appropriate professional boundaries.
- Take diligent and proactive steps to protect team members from harm.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries with youth at all times, including:
  - Being alert to the imbalance of power that exists in relationships between adults and students or young adults.
  - Acting as role models for students.
  - Setting appropriate limits with students and encouraging their growth, learning, and autonomy.
- Adults working in *FIRST* programs are also expected to set an example of *Gracious Professionalism*, and consistently provide/maintain:
  - Environments that are safe and welcoming for all participants and adhere to our ***FIRST*** Core Values and our commitment to ***STEM for Everyone***™

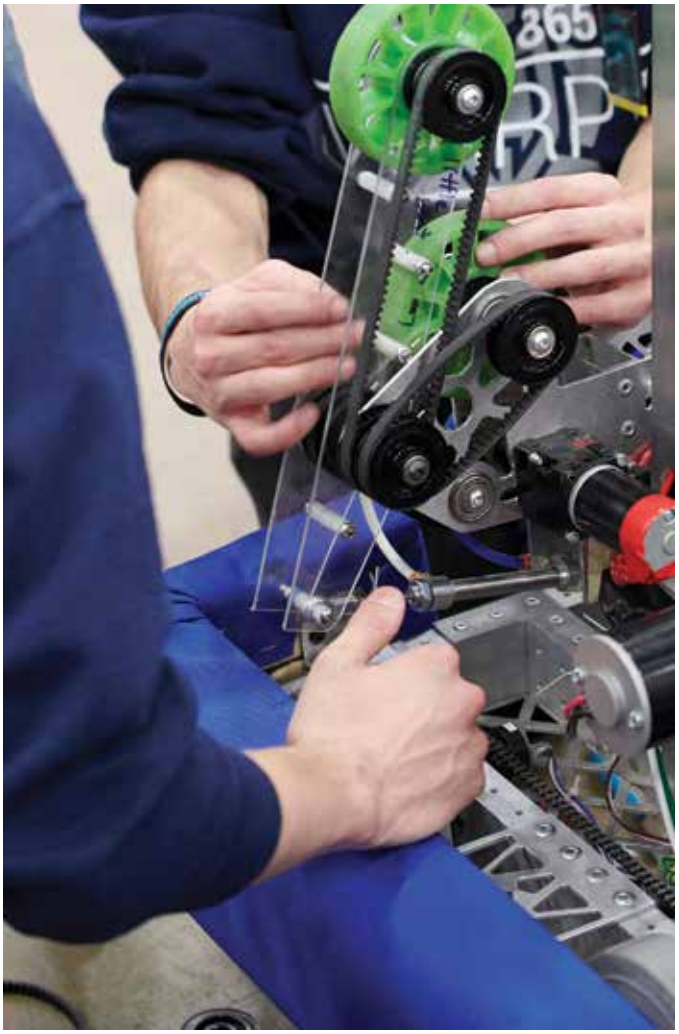


Violations and Reporting Expectations

Any adult working with a *FIRST* team who becomes aware of a potential violation of this ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct (non-YPP), or a *FIRST* Youth Protection Program (YPP) requirement, or any conduct that may place a youth participant at risk, or who is in doubt about whether a behavior is appropriate, is required to immediately report the concern promptly.

Reports may be made to a lead coach (if a team lead coach is not the potential violator), the hosting school or organization, local *FIRST* leadership and/or *FIRST* Youth Protection, as appropriate.

Violations of the ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct or Youth Protection Policies may result in corrective action, including potential removal from participation in *FIRST* programs.



Distinction between *FIRST* Code of Conduct and Youth Protection Concerns

YOUTH PROTECTION CONCERNS

Youth Protection concerns primarily involve conduct affecting the safety, well-being, dignity, or appropriate boundaries of youth participants.

These concerns require reporting, documentation, and review by Youth Protection and any local, event or hosting organization (as applicable).

Examples include:

- Engaging in any activity that endangers the safety or well-being of a youth participant.
- Deliberately making a youth feel shame, fear, or humiliation, or engaging in demeaning or intimidating behavior.
- One-on-one interactions that violate supervision expectations.
- Conduct that creates a reasonable concern regarding youth safety, appropriate boundaries, supervision, or safeguarding expectations.
- Private or non-transparent communication with youth outside approved contexts.
- Encouraging secrecy or concealing interactions from parents, guardians, or other adults.
- Engaging in activity that violates a community member's reasonable expectation of privacy.
- Engaging youth in non-program-related personal activities outside appropriate, pre-existing relationships.
- Making sexually explicit remarks; sharing explicit material; or using offensive language or gestures toward youth.
- Grooming behaviors, including attempts to isolate a youth or normalize inappropriate conduct.
- Failure to follow required screening or Youth Protection training requirements where applicable.
- Failure to follow Reporting Concerns and Response Requirements related to youth safety.

In some circumstances, conduct involving adults may also be reviewed when it occurs in the presence of youth participants, creates risk to youth safety, reflects significant boundary concerns, or otherwise undermines a safe environment for youth participants.

For example, inappropriate physical contact or conflict between adults may qualify as a Youth Protection concern

if the incident was witnessed by youth, or *FIRST* YPP determines that the conduct indicates future risk to youth or the conduct undermined the overall safety of the event and youth participants.

Conduct that involves the safety, well-being, or appropriate treatment of youth participants may constitute a Youth Protection concern and should be reported through the Youth Protection reporting process.

Not all conduct that violates the ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct constitutes a Youth Protection concern. Concerns that do not involve the safeguarding or protection of youth participants should be addressed through the appropriate program or organizational channels.

Additional examples of prohibited conduct and boundary violations are provided in Appendix B: Examples of Prohibited Conduct and Boundary Violations. Any conduct that compromises the safety, dignity, or well-being of youth participants may constitute a violation of the *FIRST* YPP. **Not all conduct that violates the *FIRST* Code of Conduct will require a Youth Protection investigation.**

FIRST CODE OF CONDUCT MATTERS (NON-YPP)

FIRST Code of Conduct matters involve behavior that does not meet expectations for professionalism, respect, or collaboration but does not directly impact youth safety or create a safeguarding concern. Not all inappropriate, unprofessional, or disrespectful conduct constitutes a Youth Protection concern.

Concerns that do not involve the safeguarding and protection of youth – such as concerns with judging, game rules/calls, or team dynamics and/or management – should be directed to your local partner or hosting organization and can also be submitted using this form and selecting the appropriate Program and Type.

Examples include:

- Disrespectful, dismissive, or unprofessional communication between adults.
- Adult-to-adult conflict or interpersonal disputes.
- Issues related to team dynamics and composition decisions.
- Failure to demonstrate *Gracious Professionalism*.
- Inappropriate tone or conduct in meetings, events, or communications.
- Policy or procedural violations without youth safety implications.
- Concerns with event execution.
- Program policies such as game rules or judging.
- Using *FIRST* programs, relationships, or team activities for personal, financial, or other improper benefit.

Appropriate Adult-Youth Interactions and Boundaries

The examples of prohibited conduct and boundary violations described in this Guide are intended to establish clear expectations for safe interactions between adults and youth participants. The behavior of all adults supporting *FIRST* programs must be within the bounds of appropriate conduct. This will not only protect youth participants but may also protect adults working with teams from false accusations of misconduct.

PHILOSOPHY

Mentoring is essential to the *FIRST* experience — inspiring team members, building their confidence, and preparing them for the future. All *FIRST* programs are conducted in a manner that not only builds technical skills but also fosters trust and camaraderie among team members and with the coaches, mentors, and other adults who support them.

Because of the nature of mentoring relationships, adults bear primary responsibility for establishing and maintaining appropriate physical and emotional boundaries. This section of the Guide will describe critical concepts that adults should be familiar with in order to create safe mentoring environments.

Adult volunteers must understand that a **power imbalance** exists between adults in leadership or mentorship roles and student participants.

Adults working with youth must exercise sound judgment and ensure that interactions remain appropriate, transparent, and focused on the goals of *FIRST* programs.

Even adult/student relationships that begin as supportive may develop into ones that are unhealthy or harmful. This section outlines key concepts, risk indicators, and expectations to help prevent harm and support appropriate reporting.

Individuals seeking to exploit youth may attempt to use mentoring roles or positions of trust to develop inappropriate relationships. Team members and adults working in *FIRST* programs must be aware of this risk and if they have concerns about possible unhealthy relationships or efforts being made to form unhealthy relationships, they are required to report their concerns to a team lead coach (if not involved in the matter) and submit a report to *FIRST* Youth Protection.

POWER IMBALANCE

Youth-serving organizations recognize that inherent power differences exist between adults and youth participants, regardless of intent or prior relationship. Adults in coaching, mentoring, or volunteer roles hold positions of authority, influence, and trust.

This power imbalance can make it difficult for youth participants to recognize inappropriate behavior, set boundaries, or feel comfortable declining requests.

As a result, adults are responsible for maintaining appropriate boundaries at all times, regardless of a youth participant's behavior, maturity, or perceived consent.

Power imbalances may be especially relevant in situations involving:

- Former participants transitioning into mentor or volunteer roles.
- Adults in positions of authority or influence.
- Situations involving evaluation, advancement, or access to opportunities.

DATING, ROMANTIC, AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Because of the inherent power imbalance between adults and youth participants, any romantic, dating, or intimate relationship between an adult volunteer and a youth participant is strictly prohibited, regardless of the age of consent in the applicable jurisdiction.

Such relationships are inherently unequal and may compromise the safety, well-being, and trust of youth participants, as well as the integrity of *FIRST* programs. Engaging in such conduct constitutes a serious violation of the *FIRST* Youth Protection Program and may result in immediate removal from participation in *FIRST* programs and activities.

Youth participants may form age-appropriate relationships with their peers. However, once a youth participant transitions into an adult volunteer role, they are immediately held to the same standards and expectations as other adults. An individual serving as an adult volunteer may not supervise, mentor, or otherwise serve in a volunteer role with a team that includes a youth participant with whom they have a current or prior romantic or intimate relationship.

In addition, adult volunteers are prohibited from initiating or pursuing romantic, dating, or intimate relationships with any youth participant.

Adult volunteers are also strongly discouraged from initiating romantic relationships with recent alumni (i.e., former youth participants who have graduated from high school within the last four years) particularly when a prior mentoring or supervisory relationship existed. Significant differences in age, authority, influence, or prior mentoring relationships may create actual or perceived power imbalances and raise concerns regarding grooming or exploitation.

BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

Because grooming can be difficult to identify, Youth Protection focuses on maintaining clear and appropriate boundaries between adults and youth participants as the primary prevention strategy. Individuals who seek to sexually abuse or exploit children frequently attempt to gain access to children through youth serving organizations. These behaviors often occur gradually and may involve attempts to normalize inappropriate interactions over time.

We encourage supportive relationships between our students and all the adults who coach and mentor. However, even appropriate relationships may become unhealthy if boundaries are not maintained.

Boundary violations refer to observable behaviors where an adult fails to maintain appropriate limits in interactions with a youth participant. These expectations apply regardless of intent. Boundary violations may:

- Create confusion, discomfort, or distress.
- Give the appearance of secrecy or favoritism.
- Increase the risk of more serious misconduct.

Examples of boundary violations may include:

- Private or one-on-one electronic communication with youth participants outside the context of team activities.
- Sharing personal problems or seeking emotional support from a youth participant.
- Favoring or singling out a specific youth participant for special treatment.
- Physical contact that is not appropriate for the setting or age of the youth.
- Requesting the youth participants keep interactions or communication secret.

Adults working with *FIRST* teams are expected to avoid situations that may create the appearance of favoritism, secrecy, or inappropriate relationships.

Interactions between adults and youth participants should be observable and interruptible by other adults.

MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ADULTS AT ALL TIMES, REGARDLESS OF A YOUTH PARTICIPANT'S BEHAVIOR, MATURITY, OR PERCEIVED CONSENT.

Concerns regarding grooming behaviors, boundary violations, or other inappropriate interactions should be reported in accordance with the Reporting Concerns and Response Requirements section of this Guide. Adults are not expected to determine intent. Any concerning behavior should be reported to *FIRST* Youth Protection via the Reporting Portal.

GROOMING

Experts indicate that the term "grooming" describes a pattern of behaviors used to build trust with a youth participant and create opportunities for inappropriate or abusive conduct. However, there is no single agreed upon definition of "grooming", and such behaviors are often subtle and designed to avoid detection. Grooming behaviors may appear similar to positive mentoring and are often difficult to distinguish in isolation.

Grooming behaviors may involve attempts to:

- Build trust or a special relationship with a youth participant.
- Isolate the youth from peers or other adults.
- Provide special attention, gifts, or privileges.
- Gradually introduce behaviors that violate normal boundaries.
- Encourage secrecy.

These behaviors often overlap with boundary violations and may not be clearly identifiable on their own.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND ONLINE INTERACTION

The *FIRST* YPP applies to all online and digital interactions with youth participants, including in-person and virtual interactions, as well as communications conducted through texting, email, messaging platforms, digital tools, and social media.

All participants must follow the *FIRST* Code of Conduct and maintain appropriate boundaries, transparency, and supervision in digital communications. Digital interactions should be treated with the same expectations as in-person interactions.

Digital interactions must be observable and interruptible whenever possible. Private, one-on-one communication between adults and youth should be avoided.

FIRST does not monitor or moderate third-party platforms used by teams, Program Delivery Partners, or event organizers.

Teams are responsible for:

- establishing expectations for appropriate online behavior.
- ensuring adult oversight of communications.
- maintaining transparency in digital interactions.
- providing clear reporting pathways for concerns.

Concerns related to online or digital interactions must be reported in accordance with the Reporting Concerns and Response Requirements section of this Guide. Online behavior that raises safety concerns should be treated the same as in-person conduct.

Additional guidance, examples, and platform-specific best practices are provided in Appendix D: Best Practices for Online Communication Platforms and Digital Interaction.

RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF ABUSE AND OTHER WARNING SIGNS

All adults working with youth share responsibility for recognizing and reporting potential signs of abuse or neglect. Individuals are not expected to determine whether abuse has occurred but should be aware of indicators that may suggest a youth participant is at risk.

Potential indicators may include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behavior, mood, or engagement.
- Withdrawal from activities or peers.
- Fear of certain individuals or environments.
- Unexplained injuries or frequent complaints of pain.
- Age-inappropriate sexual behavior or knowledge.

These indicators are not exhaustive and may have other explanations; however, any concerning pattern or behavior should be reported in accordance with this Guide.

Adults are not expected to determine whether abuse, grooming, or misconduct has occurred. Any concerning behavior, pattern, disclosure, or situation should be reported in accordance with this Guide.

Additional examples and guidance are provided in Appendix G: Guidelines for Parents and Guardians.

Youth Protection Clearance (YPP Clearance)

These definitions are intended to ensure that individuals are assigned the appropriate Youth Protection requirements based on their role and responsibilities.

All adults who regularly interact with youth participants are subject to applicable *FIRST* Youth Protection Program requirements. Adults serving in team-based roles must be properly rostered with a team, and Event Volunteers must be properly registered for their assigned event role.

Youth Protection Clearance (YPP Clearance) information is available in the *FIRST* Dashboard under the Youth Protection page. The page displays applicable Youth Protection requirements and the completion status of all required clearance components, including training, background screening, policy acknowledgment, and any applicable local or jurisdictional requirements.

YPP Clearance Components

YPP Clearance is the process by which adults are approved to serve in roles designated by *FIRST* as requiring YPP Clearance. Requirements are determined based on an individual's role within *FIRST* programs and activities.

FIRST may designate team and event volunteer roles as requiring YPP Clearance based on program, operational, legal, risk management, or jurisdictional requirements. Individuals must satisfy all applicable clearance requirements before serving in a designated role.

YPP Clearance Defined

YPP Clearance requirements are determined based on an individual's role, responsibilities, access to youth participants or youth participant information, and applicable program, operational, legal, or jurisdictional requirements.

YPP Clearance includes:

- Acknowledgment and agreement to comply with the *FIRST* Code of Conduct and *FIRST* YPP.
- Completion of a background screening (where required).
- Completion of Youth Protection Training.
- Additional requirements may apply based on jurisdiction.

Outside of U.S. and Canada, *FIRST* may require alternative or additional screening and training measures as appropriate.

Youth Protection Cleared Adult: An adult who has satisfied all applicable *FIRST* YPP Clearance requirements for their assigned role.

SCREENING REQUIREMENT

Adults (18 and older) serving in designated team or event volunteer roles in the U.S. and Canada are required to obtain YPP Clearance, including completion of background screening and annual completion of Youth Protection training, prior to serving in the role.

Youth Protection Screening includes criminal background checks. Some jurisdictions may also require additional local or state clearances.

In the United States and Canada:

- Completion of a background check administered or approved by *FIRST* is required.
- Additional local or state requirements may apply.

Outside the U.S. and Canada:

- *FIRST* expects teams, volunteers, and Program Delivery Partners to implement background screening and Youth Protection training to the extent permitted by local laws and regulations.
- Where local laws permit, criminal background screening should be conducted for adults serving in roles with regular interaction with youth participants.
- Individuals and organizations must comply with all applicable local laws, safeguarding requirements, and organizational policies. Where local requirements exceed *FIRST* standards, the more protective standard should be followed.

TRAINING REQUIREMENT

Youth Protection Training is a required component of YPP Clearance and is designed to ensure that adults understand how to recognize, prevent, and respond to risks to youth safety. Individuals assigned to team or event volunteer roles that require YPP Clearance must:

- Complete Youth Protection Training before serving in a role that requires YPP Clearance.
- Renew training annually or as required.

JURISDICTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

In the U.S. and Canada:

- Background screening is required as part of YPP Clearance.
- Additional state or provincial requirements may apply and must be followed.

Outside the U.S. and Canada:

FIRST partners, teams, and volunteers must comply with all applicable local laws and regulations related to child protection, safeguarding, and reporting requirements within their jurisdiction.

At a minimum, all participants must adhere to core Youth Protection principles outlined in this Guide, including:

- Maintaining appropriate boundaries.
- Ensuring safe supervision practices.
- Reporting concerns related to youth safety.

WHO MUST COMPLETE CLEARANCE

YPP Clearance is required for:

- Lead coaches.
- Mentors.
- Team administrators who opt to manage the youth roster.
- Team volunteers.
- Event volunteers in roles identified by *FIRST* as requiring clearance.

Individuals must complete required clearance components prior to role assignment or having regular interaction with youth.

SUPERVISION AND PARTICIPATION LIMITS

Individuals who have not completed the required YPP Clearance may only participate in limited, supervised capacities as determined by *FIRST* and may not serve in roles requiring clearance.

Youth mentors and any roles, including event volunteers 17 and under and walk-on volunteers, not subject to background screening must remain under supervision of a *FIRST* YPP-cleared adult at all times.

ONGOING OBLIGATIONS

All individuals who have completed YPP Clearance must immediately notify *FIRST* Youth Protection of:

- Any criminal charges or criminal investigations that could affect the safety or well-being of youth participants or an individual's eligibility to serve in a *FIRST* role.
- Any involvement in child protection investigations, claims, or proceedings.

Notification can be emailed to **safety@firstinspires.org**. Failure to provide such notice may result in disciplinary action.



Reporting Concerns and Response Requirements

Reporting Concerns

Protecting children on a *FIRST* team from emotional or physical injury requires knowledge, judgment, and diligent oversight by adults who make it a priority to promptly report any concerns about potentially inappropriate behavior, and who listen carefully to indications or disclosures of behaviors or conditions that might lead to abuse or otherwise be unsafe.

Anyone working with a *FIRST* team, event, or program who observes, receives information, or reasonably suspects that a youth participant may be at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, grooming, boundary violations, harassment, retaliation, or other harm is **required to report their concerns immediately** to the appropriate authorities, when required by law, and to *FIRST* through the Youth Protection reporting process, as described in this section.

The individual reporting should not attempt to investigate the matter, confront the involved parties, or independently gather evidence beyond documenting information already available to them.

When in doubt, report.

What Should Be Reported?

The following concerns should be reported to *FIRST* Youth Protection:

- Suspected child abuse or neglect.
- Grooming behaviors.
- Boundary violations.
- Inappropriate adult-youth interactions.
- Harassment, bullying, intimidation, or exploitation involving youth participants.
- Violations of supervision requirements.
- Inappropriate digital communications with youth participants.
- Retaliation against an individual for reporting a concern.
- Any conduct that may place a youth participant's safety or well-being at risk.

A report may be submitted even when information is incomplete, or uncertainty exists regarding whether a policy violation occurred.



Responding to Disclosure of Abuse

A "disclosure" occurs when a youth participant shares information about abuse, neglect, exploitation, or another unsafe experiences. Disclosures may be direct or indirect and should always be taken seriously.

If a youth participant discloses a concern:

- Listen calmly and without judgment.
- Thank the youth for sharing the information and take them seriously.
- Reassure the youth participant that they did the right thing by speaking up.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Do not attempt to investigate or ask leading questions.
- Document the information as accurately as possible.
- Report the concern immediately.

All disclosures must be reported in accordance with applicable laws and the reporting requirements outlined in this Guide.

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect must be made to appropriate local authorities (e.g., child protection agencies or law enforcement) in accordance with applicable laws and the procedures of the hosting school or organization, where applicable.

FIRST Youth Protection must also be notified, to the extent permitted by the hosting organization and applicable law.

When reporting to *FIRST* Youth Protection, individuals should include information about any reports made to external authorities including agencies contacted, case numbers, and/or contact information, if available.

If a report has not been made to external authorities, *FIRST* Youth Protection may make such a report, as appropriate.

Mandated Reporting

Many jurisdictions require individuals working with youth-serving organizations to report suspected abuse or neglect to designated authorities. Adults working with *FIRST* teams are expected to understand and comply with applicable mandated reporting laws.

Failure to comply with mandated reporting obligations may result in legal consequences and/or restrictions on participation in *FIRST* programs.

United States - State Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Numbers

Canada - Provincial and Territorial Assistance

Global - Child Protection reporting information for each country

Other Safety Concerns

Not all safety concerns involve abuse or misconduct.

If a youth participant's safety may be compromised by non-abuse risks (e.g., unsafe environments, hazardous conditions, threats of violence, self-harm concerns), adults must take reasonable steps to mitigate the risk and protect youth. Any circumstances that may affect participant safety should be addressed immediately and reported through appropriate channels (e.g., local authorities, the hosting organization). When youth safety may be impacted, *FIRST* Youth Protection must also be notified.



Mental Health and Well-Being

FIRST recognizes that youth safety includes mental and emotional well-being. Teams are encouraged to foster environments where participants feel supported, respected, and comfortable raising concerns related to stress, anxiety, bullying, or emotional harm.

Mental health concerns may impact a participant's safety, well-being, and ability to engage in program activities. These concerns should be taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

Recognizing and Responding to Concerns

All adults working with youth should be able to recognize when a participant may be experiencing significant distress and take appropriate action when safety concerns are present. Adults should:

- be attentive to signs of distress, including withdrawal, sudden behavioral changes, and/or emotional escalation.
- respond in a calm, supportive, and non-judgmental manner.
- avoid dismissing or minimizing concerns.
- refer concerns to parents/guardians, team leadership, event leadership, school personnel, *FIRST* Youth Protection, or other appropriate resources as circumstances warrant.

Teams are encouraged to:

- Promote welcoming and psychologically safe environments.
- Address bullying, exclusion, and peer conflict early.
- Encourage youth to seek support from trusted adults.

Immediate Safety Concerns

If a youth participant expresses thoughts of self-harm, suicidal ideation, threats of violence or other situations where a participant may be at risk of harming themselves or others, this should be treated as an immediate safety concern. Contact the following resources as appropriate:

- Parent or guardian.
- Team leadership.
- Event leadership.
- Emergency services.
- Local crisis resources.

In the United States and U.S. territories, individuals may contact the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** by **calling or texting 988** or using online chat. For resources in other countries, see the Youth Protection Contacts and Agencies section of this Guide.

FIRST encourages teams and families to use age-appropriate mental health and digital safety resources, to help youth build resilience, healthy boundaries, and safe online behaviors.

Additional mental health resources are provided on the *FIRST* Youth Protection Program website.

Reporting Considerations

Mental health concerns may also require reporting to *FIRST* Youth Protection when they involve:

- Bullying, harassment, intimidation, or retaliation.
- Emotional abuse.
- Conduct that places a youth participant at risk.
- Other behavior that may constitute a Youth Protection concern.

Understanding the Scope of Youth Protection

FIRST reviews all reports submitted through Youth Protection reporting channels to determine whether a youth safety concern is present.

Not all concerns submitted through Youth Protection reporting channels fall within the scope of a Youth Protection review or investigation.

Some concerns may be determined to fall outside the scope of Youth Protection and may be referred to another department, Program Delivery Partner, event leadership, host organization, or other appropriate party for review and resolution.

Examples of concerns that are generally outside the scope of Youth Protection include:

- Judging decisions.
- Game rules or event rulings.
- Event execution or quality.
- Team management disputes.
- Team composition decisions.
- Adult-to-adult interpersonal conflicts without youth safety implications.
- *FIRST* Code of Conduct concerns that do not involve youth safety or safeguarding issues.
- General program administration concerns.

A determination that a concern falls outside the scope of Youth Protection does not mean the concern lacks merit or importance. It means the concern does not require Youth Protection investigation or intervention. For more information refer to Appendix B: Examples of Prohibited Conduct and Boundary Violations.

FIRST may share information with appropriate individuals, departments, or hosting organizations to facilitate review and resolution of non-youth protection concerns.

When appropriate, concerns that fall outside the scope of Youth Protection may be addressed through other *FIRST* programs, departments, event leadership, Program Delivery Partners, host organizations, or local team leadership.

Reporting Concerns to *FIRST*

All *FIRST* youth and adult participants may report concerns related to youth safety or medical incidents to *FIRST* using the *FIRST* Reporting Portal, by email at **safety@firstinspires.org**, or by calling **(603) 206-2050**.

The *FIRST* Youth Protection team will review reports and contact reporters, as appropriate/necessary.

When reporting an issue to *FIRST*, it is helpful to provide any supporting documentation about the concern including photographs, videos, emails, screen shots, or other relevant records whenever available.

What Happens After a Report is Submitted?

After receiving a report, *FIRST* Youth Protection will assess the information provided and determine the appropriate course of action.

Depending on the circumstances, *FIRST* may:

- Request additional information.
- Implement temporary protective measures.
- Coordinate with host organizations or external authorities.
- Conduct or support an investigation.
- Refer the matter to another appropriate department or organization.
- Close the matter if no Youth Protection concern is identified.
- Implement protective measures at any stage when necessary to safeguard youth participants and do not imply wrongdoing.

Additional information regarding the Youth Protection Case Process, investigations, confidentiality, outcomes, and appeals is provided in Appendix A: Youth Protection Case Process.

Confidentiality and Non-Retaliation

FIRST Youth Protection is available to advise any individual with concerns about the safety of children in *FIRST* programs and may be contacted directly for guidance and assistance if information is needed regarding youth safety concerns.

All information regarding Youth Protection concerns is treated as confidential information, including the identity of the individual making the report. Information will only be disclosed on a need-to-know basis as required to resolve the youth protection issue, or as required by law, or to make or support a report to child protection authorities.

FIRST strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who, in good faith, reports a Youth Protection concern or participates in a Youth Protection review or investigation. Allegations of retaliation will be treated as separate Youth Protection concerns and may result in disciplinary action.

Individuals who fail to adhere to the ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct or *FIRST* Youth Protection policies may be excluded from working in *FIRST* programs and at *FIRST* events.

Reporting Medical Incidents

Medical incidents and physical injuries occurring at *FIRST* events must be reported through the ***FIRST*** Reporting Portal using the Medical Incident Report form.

Prompt reporting helps *FIRST* identify safety risks, improve event safety, and ensure incidents are appropriately documented.

Individuals responsible for operating or supporting *FIRST* events should take appropriate action to address immediate safety concerns and report incidents as soon as practical.

Additional information regarding medical incident reporting requirements and event safety responsibilities is provided in Appendix F: Event Safety and Operations.



Roles and Youth Protection Responsibilities

Role Definitions

For purposes of the *FIRST* Youth Protection Program, the following role definitions apply within *FIRST* programs and activities. These definitions are intended to clarify Youth Protection expectations and may not replace or supersede role definitions used in registration systems or program-specific guidance.

- **Lead coach:** An adult (21+) formally registered with a *FIRST* team as a Lead coach and responsible for overall team leadership, supervision, and compliance with *FIRST* policies, including the *FIRST* YPP.
- **Mentor:** An adult (18+) who supports a *FIRST* team by providing technical, educational, or programmatic guidance to youth participants and contributing to team's activities and development.
- **Youth Mentor:** A youth participant who provides peer support, leadership, or assistance to a *FIRST* team while continuing to participate as a student member of the team.
- **Team Volunteer:** Any adult who supports team activities in any capacity and may interact with youth participants, whether on a regular or occasional basis.
- **Team Administrator:** An individual supporting team operations (e.g., registration, logistics, coordination) who may or may not have direct interaction with youth participants. Youth Protection requirements apply based on level of regular interaction with youth and youth roster management.
- **Event Volunteer:** An individual supporting a *FIRST* event in an assigned volunteer role. Event Volunteers must meet all applicable *FIRST* YPP requirements before serving roles requiring Youth Protection Clearance.
- **Parent/Guardian:** A parent or legal guardian of a youth participant. Parents/guardians are not considered volunteers unless they take on a defined team or event role.
- **Youth Team Member:** A Youth Team Member (or Youth Participant) is any individual participating in a *FIRST* program as a student member of a team.

For Youth Protection purposes, individuals who are 18 years old and continue to participate on a *FIRST* team in a student capacity may continue to be treated as Youth Participants. Turning 18 does not automatically change a student's status to that of an adult volunteer or mentor. However, individuals who serve in adult-designated roles, such as Event Volunteer, Coach, or Mentor, must satisfy the requirements applicable to those roles.

Youth Team Members are expected to follow the ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct and applicable team, event, and Youth Protection expectations. Youth Team Members are not considered supervising adults and may not serve in mentor, chaperone, or other adult authority roles for Youth Protection purposes.



LEAD COACHES

Because effective youth protection depends upon knowledge, experience, and good judgment, the role of the lead coach is critical. Lead coaches are the individuals who exercise the most control over a team's activities, and are best able to help team members prevent, and, if necessary, deal with, risky situations.

Every team must have two registered Lead coaches at least 21 years of age. It is strongly recommended that at least one Lead coach to be 25 years of age or older. These should be the two individuals who direct a team's day-to-day activities.

FIRST relies on lead coaches to support the standards set by the *FIRST* YPP. It is essential that lead coaches are available and approachable if a team member, parent, guardian, or anyone else connected with the team needs guidance in understanding what behaviors are appropriate or needs to report unsafe conditions or ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct violations.

FIRST requires that no lead coach, or other adult be the only adult present with one (or more) children under 18, unless it is in a regular classroom setting and in conformity with school policy. This expectation does not prohibit a parent or legal guardian from being alone with their own child; however, when other youth participants are present, the supervision expectations in this Guide apply. If coaches, mentors, or volunteers are alone for a short period of time with a student, the interaction should be observable and interruptible. Having at least two adults within sight when a child is present will ensure that help will be available in the event of an emergency and may provide clarity in assessing and reporting safety concerns or questionable incidents.

Responsibilities

Lead coaches are responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with Youth Protection policies.
- Ensuring adults who regularly interact with youth participants are:
  - Properly rostered.
  - Completed Youth Protection Clearance: policy acknowledgment, annual youth protection training, background screening, and any applicable local or state requirements as required.
- Establishing team norms, expectations, and behavioral standards.
- Implementing processes for addressing misconduct and removal of individuals.

Team Safety Meetings

FIRST expects that all team members and adults working with the team attend the Team Safety Meeting. Parents and guardians should also be encouraged to attend.

The lead coaches should conduct the meeting in a manner most appropriate for the ages of the team members; the levels of experience of the adults; and the concerns parents or guardians may raise. If needed, additional guidance for conducting the Team Safety Meeting is available through the *FIRST* website and from *FIRST* Youth Protection. Lead coaches should provide brief meetings covering the most crucial elements of the Team Safety Meeting for those unable to attend the initial Team Safety Meeting, or who become regularly involved at a later date.

Reporting

All individuals may report concerns directly to *FIRST* Youth Protection without approval. Lead coaches are expected to support reporting and escalation but are not solely responsible for determining whether a concern should be reported. Concerns can be reported using the ***FIRST*** Reporting Portal at firstinspires.org/report.

Supervision Standard

FIRST requires that no adult be the only adult present with youth participants. Interactions should be observable and interruptible.

MENTORS AND TEAM VOLUNTEERS

Mentors and team volunteers play a vital role in supporting *FIRST* teams and are expected to model appropriate behavior, maintain clear boundaries with youth participants, and comply with all *FIRST* YPP requirements. Mentors and team volunteers must:

- Follow all Youth Protection policies.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries.
- Complete required Youth Protection Clearance when applicable.
- Report concerns.

Event Volunteers

Event volunteers play an important role in creating a safe, welcoming, and well-supervised environment for youth participants. Event volunteers are often the most visible representatives of *FIRST* and share responsibility for maintaining safe interactions and promptly addressing or reporting concerns involving youth safety.

Event Volunteers in the U.S. and Canada who are 18 years of age or older are required to obtain Youth Protection Clearance prior to role assignment. Event Volunteers under the age of 18 are not subject to screening requirements and must remain under the supervision of screened adults in accordance with applicable Youth Protection requirements.

Regardless of role or clearance status, adults should avoid one-on-one, non-observable interactions with youth participants. Interactions should remain observable and interruptible. Having at least two adults within sight when a child is present will ensure that help will be available in the event of an emergency and may provide clarity in assessing and reporting safety concerns or questionable incidents.

Event volunteers must:

- Follow *FIRST* Youth Protection policies and event guidelines.
- Remain within assigned volunteer roles and responsibilities.
- Model and maintain appropriate boundaries with youth participants.
- Avoid isolated, private, or non-transparent interactions with youth participants.
- Support observable and interruptible interactions at all times.
- Immediately report safety concerns, boundary violations, policy violations, or suspected misconduct.
- Model *Gracious Professionalism* and respectful behavior.

Event volunteers should not:

- Provide transportation to youth participants
- Arrange private meetings with youth participants.
- Engage in private electronic communications with youth participants outside approved event activities.
- Assume supervisory responsibilities beyond their assigned role.

TEAM ADMINISTRATORS

Team Administrators who want to manage the youth roster (have access to youth participant information) must obtain Youth Protection Clearance and comply with applicable Youth Protection requirements, maintain appropriate confidentiality, and support team compliance with registration, clearance, and Youth Protection processes.

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Parents and guardians are important partners in supporting a safe and positive experience for youth participants and are encouraged to understand Youth Protection expectations, remain engaged, and communicate any concerns related to youth safety. Parents/guardians are encouraged to:

- Review Youth Protection materials.
- Stay engaged in team activities.
- Support open communication.
- Parents and guardians may report concerns directly to *FIRST* Youth Protection at any time.

YOUTH MENTORS AND STUDENT LEADERS (UNDER AGE 18)

FIRST encourages veteran team members to serve as Youth Mentors to teams with younger participants. It is part of the *FIRST* ethos and mission – giving back to the community, helping others succeed, and serving as a positive role model are all essential to the *FIRST* experience. Youth Mentors cannot fill the role of Lead coaches.

Although these adult lead coaches may limit their role with the team to overall direction while the youth mentors provide leadership and instruction to the team, the adult's oversight is key.

Youth mentors:

- Must remain under adult supervision.
- Are not considered cleared adults.
- Must follow *FIRST* Code of Conduct expectations.

Appendix A: Youth Protection Case Process

Applies to: All *FIRST*® programs, events, teams, volunteers, mentors, coaches, staff, and partners.

Purpose: To ensure concerns related to youth safety are handled promptly, consistently, appropriately, and fairly, while prioritizing the well-being of youth.

Youth Protection Case Process

FIRST follows a structured Youth Protection case process designed to protect youth, ensure fairness, and meet legal and ethical obligations.

This process may include:

- Intake and initial assessment.
- Determination of scope and appropriate handling.
- Investigation, when warranted.
- Outcome determination.
- Case closure.

Protective actions (e.g., temporary restrictions or removal) may be implemented at any stage to safeguard youth. These actions are preventative and do not imply wrongdoing.

FIRST may coordinate with or defer to hosting organizations (e.g., schools or partner organizations) or external authorities for initial review or investigation, depending on the nature of the concern. *FIRST* may also choose to conduct additional review as appropriate.

PURPOSE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FIRST is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, and respectful environment for all youth participants. The Youth Protection process for responding to concerns is intended to:

1. Protect youth from harm.
2. Appropriately address concerns and allegations.
3. Ensure fairness and consistency.
4. Meet legal, ethical, and organizational obligations.
5. Maintain trust within the *FIRST* community.

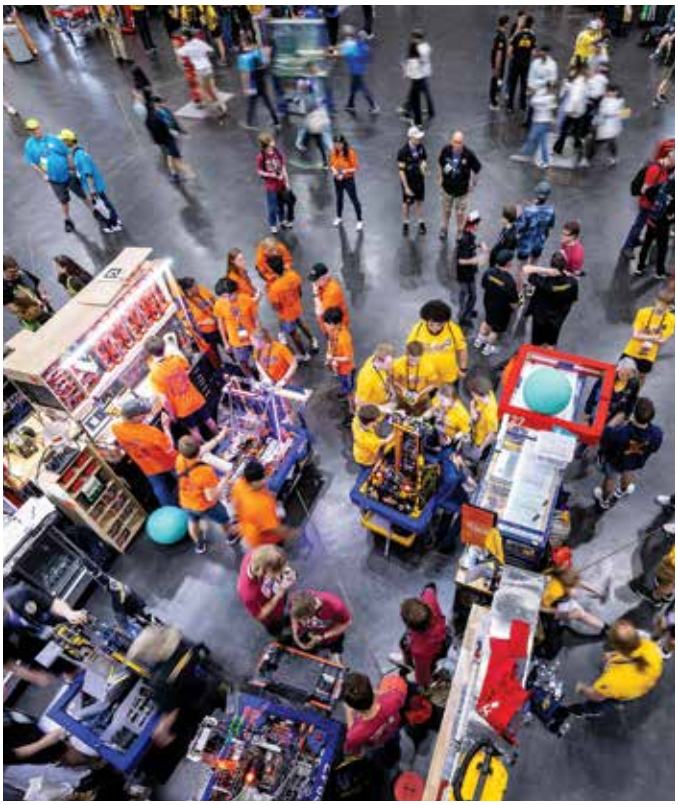
All Youth Protection cases are handled with:

- ✔ Youth safety as the top priority.
- ✔ Confidentiality, shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- ✔ Timeliness.
- ✔ Neutrality and fairness.
- ✔ Trauma-informed practices.

REPORTING A YOUTH PROTECTION CONCERN

Youth Protection concerns may be reported through *FIRST*'s designated Reporting Portal.

Reports may be made by youth participants, parents/guardians, event volunteers or mentors, lead coaches or team leadership, staff or partners, or members of the public. There is no requirement for certainty or proof to make a report. Concerns should be reported when behavior feels unsafe, inappropriate, or concerning.



Anonymous Reporting

Reporters may provide anonymous reports by not providing their name in the Reporting Portal. However, anonymous reports may limit the ability of *FIRST* to address the concern and prevent Youth Protection from following up with the individual reporting the concern and properly investigating the concern.

INITIAL REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Upon receipt of a report, *FIRST* will conduct an initial assessment to determine:

- ✔ Whether the concern involves youth safety or whether the concern should be directed to another party for resolution (such as hosting organization or local leadership which can include Program Delivery Partners and/or team lead coaches).
  - – Whether immediate protective actions are required.
- ✔ Whether mandatory reporting obligations apply.
- ✔ The appropriate next steps for review or investigation.

Immediate Actions May Include:

- ✔ Temporary suspension or removal of eligibility to volunteer, especially in cases where there is a potential imminent risk of harm. (Protective immediate actions are preventative, not disciplinary, and do not imply wrongdoing).
- ✔ Event or team restrictions.
- ✔ Notifications to appropriate authorities when required by law.

SCOPE AND JURISDICTION CONSIDERATIONS

Youth Protection cases may include, but are not limited to:

- ✔ Boundary violations or grooming behaviors.
- ✔ Sexual misconduct or abuse.
- ✔ Physical abuse or inappropriate discipline.
- ✔ Emotional or psychological harm.
- ✔ Neglect.
- ✔ Harassment or exploitation involving youth.
- ✔ Retaliation related to reporting a concern.
- ✔ Violations of the ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct or other *FIRST* policies that involve youth safety. Some reports involving adult-on-adult or youth-on-adult conduct may also be reviewed by Youth Protection when they create a risk to youth participants or otherwise fall within the scope of the *FIRST* Youth Protection Program. Reports outside the scope of Youth Protection may be referred to the appropriate department or organization.

This process applies regardless of:

- Location where the alleged misconduct occurred (team, event, online, travel, or third-party setting).
- *FIRST* Program affiliation.
- Employment or volunteer status.

Case Considerations and Limitations

Youth Protection does not investigate all adult-to-adult conflicts. However, adult conduct may be reviewed where it impacts youth safety, creates risk, or reflects boundary concerns.

Youth-on-adult or peer-to-peer concerns may be reviewed when youth safety, participant well-being, or program integrity are at risk.

Reports made in bad faith or misuse of the reporting process may result in disciplinary action.

Participation in the reporting process does not exempt individuals from accountability for separate violations of *FIRST* policies.

INVESTIGATION PROCESS

When warranted pursuant to the discretion of the Youth Protection team, *FIRST* will initiate a Youth Protection investigation. Investigation activities may include:

- ✔ Review of written reports, documentation, photographs, or video.
- ✔ Interviews with involved parties and witnesses.
- ✔ Review of digital communications or records.
- ✔ Coordination with Program Delivery Partners.
- ✔ Consultation with the *FIRST* General Counsel, other legal counsel or safeguarding experts.

Investigations are conducted by trained personnel and may occur concurrently with external investigations by authorities. Cases will not be investigated if the allegations, if true, would not have resulted in a violation of the ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct, *FIRST* YPP policies, other *FIRST* policies, or the law. It is the responsibility of the reporting and responding parties to submit all evidence that they believe is relevant to the investigation, including evidence relating to history of volunteer service to *FIRST*. Letters of support or character references from members of the *FIRST* community do not typically constitute mitigating factors in determining sanctions. However, if any such letters are to be provided by a reporting or responding party, that documentation must be submitted during the investigation process.

Evidence collected in violation of the law or *FIRST* policies will not be considered. Investigations are not judicial proceedings, and hearings and opportunities for cross-examination of reporting parties and witnesses are not provided.

Confidentiality of Reporting Parties and Witnesses and Related Evidence

Based on the nature of Youth Protection investigations, the proceedings and materials reviewed are inherently confidential. Witnesses are often youth themselves. The identity of reporting parties and witnesses, and evidence submitted by witnesses is afforded confidentiality whenever possible to preserve the integrity of the investigation and promote participation in the process, as witnesses can often be reluctant to engage with investigators on these sensitive matters. However, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed to all parties, and even with these confidentiality protections, individuals may be able to determine the identity of reporting parties and witnesses. In rare cases, failure of a reporting party or witness to cooperate with an investigation may result in disciplinary action.

Cooperation with Law Enforcement and Child Protection Authorities and Disclosure to Need to Know Parties

When appropriate as determined by Youth Protection, *FIRST* will share Youth Protection case information, including identifiable information, with law enforcement, child protection authorities, and other resources necessary to support resolution and ensure youth safety.

Coordination with Hosting Organizations

In some cases, a host organization (e.g., a school, educational institution, or partner organization) may have its own child safeguarding policies and established procedures for reviewing or investigating concerns.

Where appropriate, *FIRST* Youth Protection may coordinate with or defer to the host organization to conduct a review or investigation, particularly when:

- The concern occurred within the host organization's program or facility.
- The individuals involved are subject to the host organization's policies or authority.
- The host organization has legal or regulatory responsibility for the matter.

Deferral to a host organization does not eliminate the responsibility of *FIRST* to assess risk within its programs. *FIRST* Youth Protection may:

- Review findings or outcomes from the host organization.
- Conduct additional inquiry, as appropriate.
- Implement protective actions or participation restrictions within *FIRST* programs.

FIRST reserves the right to take independent action to protect youth participants and the integrity of its programs, regardless of actions taken by a host organization or external entity.

DETERMINATIONS, OUTCOMES, AND RESOLUTIONS

Following the completion of investigations, determinations of misconduct or violation of *FIRST* policies are made by the Youth Protection investigation and leadership team using the preponderance of the evidence standard, meaning whether it was more likely than not that the alleged conduct occurred. Following the investigation, *FIRST* may determine one or more of the following outcomes, depending on the findings and circumstances:

- No policy violation found.
- Required training or corrective action.
- Role restrictions or supervision requirements.
- Suspension for a defined period.
- Permanent removal from *FIRST* programs.
- Referral to law enforcement and child protection authorities.
- Other actions deemed appropriate based on the circumstances.

Outcomes are determined based on the nature and severity of the behavior, risk to youth, prior history, applicable policy violations, and any mitigating or aggravating circumstances. *FIRST* may implement protective measures or take appropriate action to safeguard youth participants, regardless of whether external investigations are ongoing or inconclusive.

When appropriate as determined by Youth Protection, the results of investigations and determinations may be disclosed to reporting parties, team/program leadership, program delivery partners, schools, and team hosting organizations. When warranted as determined by Youth Protection, such reports or parts of such reports may be de-identified.

Any further dissemination by recipients of this information without Youth Protection approval is prohibited. Allegations of inappropriate dissemination will be treated as Youth Protection concerns and may result in disciplinary action.

Case Closure and Documentation

Cases are formally closed when findings are documented, outcomes are implemented, and required notifications are completed.

FIRST maintains confidential records of Youth Protection cases in accordance with our Privacy Policy, and legal and regulatory requirements.

Non-Retaliation

FIRST strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual who, in good faith, reports a Youth Protection concern, participates in an investigation, and/or supports a reporting individual. Retaliation may include intimidation, exclusion, harassment, threats, or adverse actions.

Allegations of retaliation will be treated as separate Youth Protection concerns and may result in disciplinary action. Only "good faith" reports to Youth Protection are subject to non-retaliation protections.

Reports made in "bad faith" will be treated as separate Youth Protection concerns and may result in disciplinary action. Likewise, violations of the *FIRST* Code of Conduct or other *FIRST* policies committed by an individual who has made a Youth Protection report are not protected and may result in disciplinary action.

FIRST reporting tools should not be misused to target others or escalate personal conflicts.

Non-Discrimination

FIRST and *FIRST* Youth Protection does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, age, religion/creed, and military/veteran status.

Transparency and Continuous Improvement

FIRST regularly reviews Youth Protection case trends to:

- ✔ Identify risk areas.
- ✔ Improve training and policies.
- ✔ Strengthen prevention efforts.
- ✔ Support a culture of safety.

APPEALS PROCESS

Individuals subject to certain Youth Protection outcomes may be eligible to request an appeal, consistent with *FIRST* policies.

To provide a consistent process for individuals or teams to request review or reconsideration of a Youth Protection related outcome.

Grounds for appeal

An appeal may be submitted by either the impacted party or responding party based on one or more of the following criteria:

1. Procedural irregularity – Evidence that the investigation process was not followed properly, and that irregularity reasonably could have affected the outcome.
2. Conflict of interest or bias – Evidence that an investigator or decision maker had a conflict of interest or demonstrated a bias that reasonably could have affected the outcome.
3. New material evidence – Relevant and material information that was not available to the investigators or decision-makers that reasonably could have affected the outcome.
4. Aggravating or mitigating circumstances – Disagreement with the sanction based on aggravating or mitigating circumstances not known by the investigator or decision-makers at the time sanctions were issued that reasonably could have affected the sanction.

Process

1. Submit written appeal – The impacted party or responding party must submit a written appeal within seven days of receiving a *FIRST* YPP resolution letter. The appeal must include:
   - Specific decision being appealed.
   - Ground(s) for appeal (as listed above).
   - Supporting documentation or evidence, if applicable.
2. Initial Review – *FIRST* YPP team, in consultation with the *FIRST* General Counsel, shall review the appeal to confirm whether the appeal meets the above criteria for consideration.
3. Appeal Review – If Youth Protection, in consultation with the General Counsel, determines that the appeal meets the required criteria, the appeal shall advance to the *FIRST* YPP Review Board for consideration. The *FIRST* YPP Review Board shall consist of at least three *FIRST* leadership staff members.

4. Decision – The *FIRST* YPP Review Board shall issue a written determination outlining whether the original decision is upheld, modified, or overturned, and/or returned to the investigation team for further investigation.

   If an appeal results in a modification or overturning of a decision, the adversely affected party (either the impacted party or responding party) may appeal that decision, using the process described above. The impacted party and responding party each may appeal only once, and any determination after those appeals is final.

Appendix B: Examples of Prohibited Conduct and Boundary Violations

The following examples are provided to help participants recognize behaviors that may violate the *FIRST*® Youth Protection Program or ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct. These examples are illustrative and not exhaustive.

Conduct should always be evaluated based on its impact on youth safety, appropriateness, and alignment with Youth Protection expectations.

Abuse, Endangerment, and Explicit Misconduct (Prohibited Conduct)

The following behaviors are strictly prohibited and must be reported immediately:

- Physical abuse or use of force against a youth participant.
- Sexual activity, sexual contact, or any sexualized behavior involving a youth participant.
- Making sexually explicit comments, jokes, or sharing explicit content.
- Encouraging or engaging in illegal activities with youth participants.
- Providing alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping, or controlled substances to youth.
- Threatening, coercing, or intimidating a youth participant.
- Deliberately humiliating, shaming, or degrading a youth.

Grooming and Exploitative Behaviors (Prohibited Conduct)

These behaviors may indicate attempts to build inappropriate relationships:

- Attempting to form a special or exclusive relationship with a specific youth.
- Giving gifts, money, or privileges to a youth participant without transparency.
- Gradually introducing inappropriate topics (e.g., sexual content, personal relationships).
- Seeking emotional dependency or positioning oneself as the youth's "only support".
- Encouraging secrecy in interactions ("don't tell your parents/coach").
- Isolating a youth participant from peers or other adults.
- Repeatedly seeking one-on-one time outside normal team activities.

Boundary Violations (Primary Prevention Focus)

Boundary violations are behaviors that may not be intended to harm but create risk, confusion, or inappropriate dynamics.

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS

FIRST standard: interactions should be observable and interruptible

- Meeting alone with a youth in a private or non-observable space.
- Remaining alone with a youth participant after others have left.
- Offering private lessons, rides, or meetings without transparency.

COMMUNICATION VIOLATIONS (INCLUDING TEXTING AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION)

Includes: texting, email, DMs, Discord, social media, gaming platforms

- Private texting or messaging with a youth participant unrelated to team activities.
- Communicating late at night or in a manner inconsistent with team expectations.
- Using disappearing messages or private channels that limit visibility.
- Moving conversations from group/team platforms to private conversations.
- Sharing personal contact information in a way that bypasses transparency.

PHYSICAL BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

- Unnecessary or prolonged physical contact (e.g., hugs, touching).
- Physical contact that is not appropriate for the setting or age.
- Initiating physical interaction that causes discomfort or confusion.

FAVORITISM AND SPECIAL TREATMENT

- Singling out a youth for special attention, roles, or opportunities.
- Allowing one youth access to spaces, resources, or privileges others do not have.
- Creating the perception of a "favorite" participant.

EMOTIONAL BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

- Sharing personal problems or seeking emotional support from a youth.
- Relying on a youth participant for personal validation or advice.
- Engaging in overly personal or intimate conversations.

Non-Program-Related Interactions

- Spending time with youth participants outside team activities without transparency.
- Inviting youth to personal events, homes, or trips unrelated to *FIRST* activities.
- Engaging youth in activities unrelated to program, education, or career development.

Secrecy and Concealment

Secrecy is a key indicator of risk

- Asking a youth to keep interactions secret.
- Concealing communications or meetings from parents, guardians, or other adults.
- Avoiding established team communication channels.

Misuse of Position or Authority

- Using a coaching or mentor role for personal, financial, or relational gain.
- Leveraging influence to pressure youth into decisions or behaviors.
- Offering advantages (e.g., leadership roles, travel opportunities) in exchange for personal attention.

Event and Travel-Related Risks

- Sharing hotel rooms with youth participants (outside approved arrangements).
- Transporting a youth alone without proper authorization and transparency.
- Failing to follow supervision expectations at events.
- Allowing youth to be unsupervised in unsafe environments.

Digital and Online Conduct Risks

- Interacting with youth through personal social media accounts in a non-transparent way.
- Engaging in private gaming or online interactions without oversight.
- Sharing inappropriate content, including violent, sexually explicit, or otherwise age-inappropriate material.
- Failing to maintain professional boundaries in online spaces.

Peer-to-Peer Misconduct (Youth-to-Youth)

Adults are responsible for addressing and reporting these concerns. While not always adult misconduct, these behaviors must still be addressed:

- Bullying, harassment, or exclusion.
- Inappropriate physical or verbal behavior between youth.
- Sharing explicit images or messages.
- Coercion, pressure, or intimidation.



Failure to Follow Youth Protection Requirements

- Failing to complete required screening or training.
- Ignoring supervision expectations.
- Not reporting known or suspected concerns.
- Interfering with or discouraging reporting.

Patterns and Escalation

Individual behaviors may not always indicate misconduct on their own; however, patterns of behavior may increase risk and should be reported.

Examples:

- Repeated private communication.
- Increasing exclusivity with a youth.
- Gradual escalation of boundary violations.

When to Report

Certainty or proof is not required to report. Concerns should be reported when:

- A behavior appears inappropriate or raises concern.
- A pattern of boundary violations is observed.
- A youth expresses discomfort or concern.
- There is uncertainty about whether conduct is appropriate.

MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ADULTS AT ALL TIMES, REGARDLESS OF A YOUTH PARTICIPANT'S BEHAVIOR, MATURITY, OR PERCEIVED CONSENT.

Appendix C: Safety Requirements for Team Activities

Safety Requirements for Team Activities

- All interactions within *FIRST*® programs must be appropriate, observable, and consistent with the ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct and *Gracious Professionalism*.® Adults are responsible for maintaining clear professional boundaries with youth participants at all times.
- Interactions must be observable and interruptible to reduce risk, consistent with youth-serving organization best practices.
- Individuals who are not team members may only participate in team activities with lead coach approval and appropriate supervision.
- Teams should establish clear expectations for communication, supervision, and personal information sharing, including digital interactions.
- *FIRST* expects that lead coaches establish age-appropriate rules for their team regarding the sharing of personal information, particularly at events or online and in accordance with Appendix D: Best Practices for Online Communication Platforms and Digital Interaction.
- Violent, hostile, or harmful behavior — including bullying, hazing, intimidation, coercion, or corporal punishment — is strictly prohibited. When behavior presents a safety concern, immediate action must be taken to separate the individual from the activity and involve appropriate adults, hosting organization, or authorities as needed.
- Prohibited substances must not be used or made available to youth participants. Controls must be in place for any permitted adult use. Alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping, or controlled substances must not be used during team activities or made available to team members. Exceptions may be made for alcohol served to adults of legal drinking age at receptions or gatherings related to team support, if controls are in place to prevent illegal use.
- Be prepared for emergencies. Procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost students or adults, and site security should be established, including a well-stocked first-aid kit, a list of special medical needs (e.g., inhalers, food allergies), and contact information for each team member's parent or guardian.
- Adults should be prepared to respond to both physical and psychological safety concerns.
- Encourage parents and guardians to get involved in team activities. If possible, keep parents and guardians apprised of the team's progress; encourage them to get to know the individuals working with the team; and make them aware of the time and place of team activities. Transparency supports safety and trust.
- Keep students safe during team fundraising activities. Developing financial support for the team can be a valuable part of the *FIRST* experience. The extent of adult supervision necessary must be based on the ages of the team members and the circumstances. Team members should not be allowed to engage in fundraising or other *FIRST*-related activities without appropriate adult supervision, as judged by a team lead coach.
- Ensure all youth participants have a Consent and Release signed by a parent or guardian at the start of each season.
- Keep team members safe while working with tools, robots, machinery, and materials. Teams must follow applicable *FIRST* program safety manuals and ensure qualified adults oversee the use of tools, machinery, and materials.



FACILITIES

When possible, *FIRST* expects that teams meet at schools or other facilities maintained for use by children or civic groups (e.g., schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc.). Such facilities are regularly inspected for safety hazards, will ordinarily accommodate individuals needing special access, and have security measures and emergency procedures in place. The following should be standard procedure for adults working with the team:

- Familiarization with the safety procedures of the facility.
- Regular survey of the space to eliminate any potential safety hazards.
- Understanding and following the safety regulations set by the school or organization hosting your team.
- Adults must follow hosting organization safety policies and ensure compliance with accessibility, emergency procedures, and hazard mitigation.

ADULT SUPERVISION

Team activities should be supervised by a minimum of two Youth Protection cleared adults, particularly when interactions are not observable by others. If students are working in different spaces without sight lines, the number of supervising adults may need to increase. This is where additional team volunteers and mentors can increase safety.

FIRST Program activities taking place in a classroom, as part of the regular school session, should follow the school's policy regarding adult supervision. These teams may be able to operate with only one Youth Protection cleared adult supervising if in accordance with school policies.

Appendix D: Best Practices for Online Communication Platforms and Digital Interaction

Purpose

FIRST® programs increasingly rely on digital platforms to support collaboration, learning, and connection. This appendix provides best practices for safe, respectful, and transparent online communication involving youth participants, consistent with the *FIRST* Youth Protection Program and ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct.

These guidelines apply to all *FIRST*-related online interactions, whether conducted through *FIRST*-hosted platforms or third-party tools selected by teams, Program Delivery Partners, or event organizers.

These best practices apply to:

- Coaches, mentors, volunteers, and employees.
- Youth participants and youth mentors.
- Program Delivery Partners.
- Parents and guardians supporting team activities.

This appendix supplements, but does not replace the ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct, *FIRST* YPP requirements, hosting organization requirements and applicable local, state/provincial, and national laws.

FIRST ONLINE PLATFORMS AND THIRD-PARTY TOOLS

FIRST provides and supports a variety of online platforms to enable teams to connect, collaborate, and participate in programs and events. Teams may also use third-party tools (e.g., messaging platforms, learning environments, collaboration software) to support team activities.

Participants should:

- Use online platforms only for *FIRST*-related purposes.
- Avoid sharing unnecessary personal information about themselves or others.
- Follow any age, role, or access restrictions established by the platform or by *FIRST*.

FIRST does not monitor or moderate third-party platforms. Teams are responsible for establishing expectations, supervision practices, and reporting pathways when using these tools.

ADULT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Adults working with youth in *FIRST* programs play a critical role in maintaining safe digital environments. Best practices include:

1. Supervision and Oversight

- Assign at least one youth protection trained and screened adult to actively oversee team communication channels.
- Ensure online interactions remain observable and interruptible.
- Avoid moving conversations from group platforms to private channels without transparency.



2. Transparency

- Avoid private, one-on-one electronic communication between adults and youth when possible.
- Use group channels or include another adult, parent, or guardian to maintain transparency.
- Avoid the use of disappearing messages or platforms that limit visibility of communication.

3. Appropriate Use

- Communicate with youth only about *FIRST*-related activities, educational matters, or logistics.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries in tone, content, and frequency of communication.
- Parents or guardians should be included in electronic communications with youth participants whenever practical and age appropriate.

4. Remote Meetings

- Apply the same expectations used for in-person activities to virtual meetings.
- All remote meetings should include at least two adults when adults are interacting with youth.
- Consider additional oversight for breakout rooms or small-group virtual sessions.

5. Boundary Management

- If a youth participant raises personal or sensitive issues, adults should maintain appropriate boundaries and seek guidance from a Lead coach/Mentor, hosting organization or *FIRST* Youth Protection when needed.

6. Social Media Use

- Social media can be a positive way to celebrate team achievements and share the *FIRST* experience. When used improperly, it can also create safety and privacy risks.

All participants are expected to:

- Follow the *FIRST* Code of Conduct online as they would in person.
- Refrain from sharing content that could cause harm, distress, or embarrassment.
- Avoid posting confidential, proprietary, or internal *FIRST* information.
- Refrain from posting defamatory content.
- Refrain from discussing topics that are for mature audiences only, such as content of a sexual nature, or content celebrating alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping, or controlled substances or gambling.

When engaging in *FIRST*-related social media activity:

- Do not represent yourself as speaking on behalf of *FIRST* unless expressly authorized.
- Follow *FIRST* trademark and branding requirements.
- Obtain appropriate consent before posting photos or videos of youth participants.
- Do not engage in harassment, bullying, intimidation, retaliatory, or discriminatory behavior.

FIRST reserves the right to remove content on *FIRST*-hosted platforms that is inconsistent with its values or *FIRST* Code of Conduct. Inappropriate online behavior may also be cause for removal from participation in *FIRST*.

REPORTING INAPPROPRIATE ONLINE BEHAVIOR

Teams should clearly communicate how concerns related to online behavior can be reported.

Participants are encouraged to:

- Use built-in reporting tools available on the platform being used and, where appropriate, report concerning interactions, content, or conduct to platform moderators or administrators for review.
- Report concerns to a trusted adult, Lead coach/Mentor, hosting organization, or *FIRST* Youth Protection

Common platform reporting resources include:

- **Discord:** Use in app reporting or the Trust and Safety form.
- **Slack:** Report to Workspace Admins/Owners or escalate to Slack via Report to Slack.
- **Google Workspace:** Use Google's Abuse reporting and workspace admin tools.

Teams should establish processes for determining who has access to these team platforms and removing access after their affiliation with the team ends.

GUIDANCE FOR YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

Youth participants are encouraged to follow these digital safety practices:

- Discuss online expectations with parents/guardians and team mentors.
- Keep personal information private.
- Never agree to meet someone offline whom you only know online.
- Trust your instincts, if something feels uncomfortable, stop engaging.
- Report concerns to a parent/guardian, trusted adult, or *FIRST* Youth Protection.
- Avoid cyberbullying, harassment, sexting, or sharing inappropriate content.
- Use privacy settings and follow platform terms of service.

ROLE OF PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

Parents and guardians play an essential role in supporting youth digital safety. *FIRST* encourages families to:

- Stay informed about platforms used by teams.
- Review online safety expectations with youth participants.
- Use available resources to support healthy digital behavior.

Disclaimer

FIRST does not monitor or moderate third-party platforms such as Discord, Slack, Google Workspace, or community forums not hosted by *FIRST*. Teams and Program Delivery Partners are responsible for setting expectations, providing supervision, and responding to concerns related to online communications used for *FIRST*-related activities.

Appendix E: Team Travel and Overnight Activities

Lead coaches are responsible for ensuring compliance with these requirements as well as any requirements of the hosting organization.

Local Travel to Team Activities

Primary responsibility for transportation to and from routine team activities rests with the parent or guardian, unless the team has established an approved transportation plan.

Youth participants may only leave a team activity with:

- A parent/guardian, or
- An authorized adult designated in advance, or
- With documented permission consistent with team procedures.

Teams should maintain clear sign-in/sign-out procedures appropriate for the age of participants.

Travel to Team Activities Away from Home and/or Overnight

TRIP PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION

When transporting team members to and from places other than those where the team ordinarily meets, or staying overnight away from home teams must implement the following safety practices when planning travel:

- Obtain written parent/guardian permission that includes:
  - Destination and itinerary.
  - Transportation arrangements.
  - Lodging details and room assignments.
  - Names and contact information of supervising adults.
  - Emergency contact information.
- Parents must be informed of any material changes to travel plans.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Youth participants and adults should carry appropriate identification as required by the destination. Teams should maintain a centralized roster including:
  - Emergency contacts.
  - Medical considerations.
  - Room assignments.
  - Travel groups.

HEALTH, ACCESS (PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES), AND INCLUSION

Adults should ensure dignity, privacy, and welcoming experience for all participants.

- Provisions for team members' needs, including access (persons with disabilities), medical conditions, allergies (food and other allergies) and other accommodations should be made in advance of the trip, including written authorization from parents/guardians to administer any medications.



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

- Every driver (transporting team members other than him or herself) should be 18 or older, with a valid driver's license and a driving history demonstrating safe driving ability, and drive a registered, inspected vehicle, with at least the minimum insurance required by the state or country in which the vehicle is registered. This also applies to hired drivers and hired vehicles. If using hired transportation, only vetted and reputable companies should be used (limit use of rideshare companies).
- Every driver must have a designated emergency contact. And, a clear communication plan in case of delay or incident.
- Every passenger should ride in a legal seat, wearing a seat belt at all times.
- In case of an emergency or delay, the driver should have directions and a designated contact person.
- Avoid one-on-one transportation of a youth participant when possible.
- Rideshare services (e.g., Uber/Lyft) should not be used by youth alone; if used, require adult authorization and oversight.
- Teams should establish clear transportation assignments in advance.

SUPERVISION DURING TRAVEL

- A minimum of two Youth Protection cleared adults should be present during team travel whenever feasible.
- Interactions must remain observable and interruptible, including during transportation, lodging, and activities.

PRE-TRIP EXPECTATIONS

Prior to travel, teams must clearly communicate expectations to youth participants and adults, including:

- Remind all travelers the *FIRST* Code of Conduct applies during the trip.
- What to do if a team member is separated from the group.
- What behaviors do you expect and what consequences exist for noncompliance.
- Every team member's privacy should be always respected, including when using the bathroom and changing clothes.
- Digital communication expectations during travel.
  - Use approved communication channels.
  - Avoid private or non-transparent communication.
- Curfew and supervision structure.
  - Clear curfew expectations.
  - Defined supervision responsibilities.
- Reporting expectations.
  - How to report concerns during travel.
  - Who to contact (Lead coach, chaperone, *FIRST* YPP, etc.).

LODGING SAFETY

- Youth participants must be assigned to age-appropriate and approved room groupings.
- Adults and youth must not share sleeping spaces, except were permitted by policy (e.g., parent/child).
- Room assignments should be documented and communicated in advance.
- Hotel/motel room doors should be locked when in the room, using the deadbolt and the chain or anchor.
- Do not open the door for strangers; if hotel staff claims to be at the door, call the front desk to confirm, before you unlock the door.
- Do not mention or display your room number in the presence of strangers.
- Upon arrival at the overnight accommodations, locate emergency exits.
- Keep a small flashlight on your bedside table, along with your room key, wallet, and cell phone; take these with you if you must leave the room.
- Conduct a room check after "lights out" to confirm team members are in their assigned rooms.
- Avoid one-on-one situations in rooms or private spaces.
- Adults should not enter youth rooms unless necessary and observable.
- Room checks should be conducted by at least two adults when possible.

YOUTH ACCOUNTABILITY AND SAFETY

Youth participants are expected to:

- ✔ Remain with assigned groups unless authorized.
- ✔ Follow curfew and supervision expectations.
- ✔ Report concerns or unsafe situations.

INCIDENT RESPONSE DURING TRAVEL

In the event of a safety concern or incident:

- Ensure immediate safety of all participants.
- Notify supervising adults and Lead coach.
- Contact emergency services when appropriate.
- Report to *FIRST* Youth Protection as required.

Hosting School or Organization Requirements and State Regulations

Schools and organizations participating in *FIRST* programs, and the states and countries in which they operate may have guidelines and safety requirements governing youth-oriented programs such as those offered by *FIRST*. Adults working in *FIRST* programs are required to comply with the youth protection policies of the school or organization hosting the team and the requirements of the states or governments in which the team meets or travels. Contact *FIRST* Youth Protection if you need assistance in obtaining this information.

Where a hosting organization has its own safeguarding or investigation process, teams should cooperate and may defer to those processes as appropriate, while still reporting to *FIRST* Youth Protection.

Teams must comply with:

- Hosting organization policies.
- Local, state/provincial, and national laws.
- Applicable child protection and supervision requirements.

Appendix F: Event Safety and Operations

Safety at *FIRST* Events

ENTITIES/INDIVIDUALS CONDUCTING EVENTS

The organization or individual(s) conducting an event is/are responsible for implementing and maintaining Youth Protection standards throughout the event, in coordination with the hosting organization and applicable laws. The party conducting the event is also required to be fully familiar with the *FIRST* Code of Conduct and Youth Protection Requirements.

Event organizers must comply with:

- Hosting organization policies.
- Facility safety requirements.
- Applicable local, state/provincial, and national laws.

Event leadership must ensure that all key personnel (including staff, volunteers, and security) are informed of:

- *FIRST* Code of Conduct expectations.
- Youth Protection requirements.
- Reporting procedures for concerns.

Event organizers must establish a clear escalation and reporting structure for youth protection concerns, including designated points of contact during the event.

SAFETY SERVICES/FACILITIES

- Event organizers must ensure appropriate emergency, medical, and security planning is in place based on the size, scope, location, and risk profile of the event. The level of services required will vary depending on the event and applicable venue requirements. The party conducting the event, in consultation with the manager of the facility and various service providers, are responsible for determining what is "adequate."
  - Number and age of participants.
  - Nature of activities (e.g., robotics, tools, crowds).
  - Venue layout and access points.
  - Presence of spectators and vendors.

As applicable to the event, emergency, medical, and security personnel should:

- Be available throughout the portions of the event for which they are responsible.
- Be appropriately trained and capable of responding to medical or other emergencies within the scope of their responsibilities.
- Be informed of the unique safety and youth protection considerations associated with events involving youth participants.
- Understand that not all individuals onsite (e.g., vendors, sponsors, exhibitors, spectators) may be screened or trained by *FIRST* and remain alert to potential safety concerns.
- Remain available until their assigned responsibilities have concluded or as otherwise required by the event safety plan.
- Facilities and service providers must comply with applicable licensing, safety, and insurance requirements.

Facilities are required to be duly licensed to hold such events, and the event activities must stay within the legally specified parameters for numbers of participants and event elements (e.g., machine shops). Those providing services for the event or performing at an event (e.g., food services, childcare services, etc.) are required to be qualified to do so and show that they are properly licensed. *FIRST*® expects that outside service providers have an insurance certificate, identifying the party conducting the event as an additional named insured.

- Security personnel should be briefed on youth protection expectations, including recognizing concerning behavior and responding to reports.
- Event staff should be aware that not all individuals onsite (e.g., vendors, spectators, sponsors) are screened or trained.

EVENT VOLUNTEERS

All event volunteers must model appropriate behavior and maintain professional boundaries with youth participants at all times. Conduct must be both appropriate and perceived as appropriate.

Event Volunteers in the U.S. and Canada who are 18 years of age or older are required to obtain Youth Protection Clearance. For the purposes of this requirement, "Event Volunteers" are defined as the individuals who are assigned specific roles by the event's Volunteer Coordinator and will be regularly interacting with youth participants.

Since background screening is not available for minors, minor volunteers working onsite events must be supervised by screened adults. It is the responsibility of the parents or guardians of the minor child, prior to the event, to ensure that their child possesses the maturity, character, and good judgment needed to be a *FIRST* volunteer.

Individuals who are exhibiting, providing entertainment, working with food vendors, or attending an event as a spectator are not required to obtain Youth Protection Clearance. These individuals should not be placed in roles involving supervision or unsupervised interaction with youth.

Volunteers whose service has been declined by *FIRST* will appear as "Do Not Assign" in the *FIRST* Volunteer Management System. Should they apply for an event, the volunteer management system will not allow them to be assigned. The reason *FIRST* has declined the individual's volunteer services will not be disclosed. Event Volunteer Coordinators are required to decline the services of such individuals in any capacity. *FIRST* requires that anyone with access to this information will keep the identity of these persons confidential.

- Event Volunteer Coordinators must not assign individuals flagged as "Do Not Assign" under any circumstances.
- Confidentiality of such determinations must be maintained.

The training and screening of coaches, mentors, and other adults who accompany *FIRST* teams to an event are the responsibility of that team's lead coaches and the local Program Delivery Partner. The party conducting the event and the event's Volunteer Coordinator are not responsible for confirming that lead coaches and other adults accompanying teams to an event have obtained Youth Protection Clearance, unless these individuals are fulfilling more than incidental event duties apart from oversight of their own team.

Regardless of whether an adult has obtained Youth Protection Clearance, adults must avoid one-on-one, non-observable interactions with youth participants. Interactions should be observable and interruptible.

Having at least two adults within sight when a child is present will ensure that help will be available in the event of an emergency and may provide clarity in assessing and reporting safety concerns or questionable incidents.

FUNDAMENTAL SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR *FIRST* EVENTS

Coaches and Mentors are responsible for ensuring that team members follow the following safety guidelines at all events:

- All participants must follow all safety rules set by the school/organization/ facility hosting the event. Before teams arrive, survey the facility, and remedy any safety hazards. Safety measures related to the game that are mandated by *FIRST* Program management must be adhered to.
- Allow only appropriate interactions between individuals. Practice *Gracious Professionalism*® and foster *Coopertition*® among team members, always adhering to the *FIRST* Code of Conduct. The use of offensive language, gestures, or behavior that is inappropriate for the ages of team members or spectators should not be tolerated. All participants should be able to effectively manage the inevitable stress of competing in an event and not resort to angry outbursts or intimidating behavior.
- Do not allow violent, hostile, or potentially harmful behavior; these are prohibited. Do not tolerate physical or verbal abuse, bullying, hazing, or confrontational behavior by anyone, including lead coaches, mentors, and parents or guardians. If anyone at the event behaves in a manner that might be harmful, security personnel should guide the individual to a separate space, if possible, and their parent or guardian, a child protection agency, or the police, should be called, as appropriate.
- Do not allow the use of controlled substances. Do not allow the use or presence of alcohol, tobacco, e-cigarettes, vaping, or controlled substances. Exceptions may be made for alcohol served to adults of legal drinking age at receptions and celebratory meals when controls are in place to prevent illegal use.
- Be prepared for emergencies. Establish procedures in advance for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost youth or adults, and security.
- Ensure safety when traveling to and from events. Oversight of team members' transportation to and from events is the responsibility of the team's lead coaches.

- Team members under 18 should only be allowed to leave an event with the approval of their lead coach or their parent or guardian, and under appropriate supervision. See Appendix E: Team Travel and Overnight Activities.
  - Youth participants may only leave under:
    - Parent/guardian supervision.
    - Authorized adult supervision.
    - Approved team procedures.
  - Ensure that all members of the team, including coaches, mentors, and parents and guardians, are aware of and comply with any public health guidelines or requirements related to communicable conditions that are set by the venue, event organizer, or local authorities.
  - Qualified adults must supervise the use of tools, robots, and equipment at all times. Keep team members safe while working with tools, robots, machinery, and materials. In advance of the event, confirm that qualified adults or volunteers are assigned to oversee the use of tools, machinery, and materials by the teams, as well as the loading in and out of robots and other gear from vehicles outside the facility.
  - Load-in and load-out activities must be supervised and organized to reduce injury risk.

REPORTING MEDICAL INCIDENTS

All medical and physical injuries/illnesses, however, slight, taking place at *FIRST* activities and events must be reported to *FIRST* using the Reporting Portal and select the medical incident form. Reports regarding slips, trips, or falls should include photos of the location where the person was injured, uploaded to the incident report before submission.

Names may be removed if privacy regulations require it.

Reporting is important for risk management purposes and to help make our events as safe as possible. It may also help to protect those responsible for the event, or involved in the incident, should questions arise later regarding the way the incident was handled.

All persons on-site who are responsible for operating the event should be able to recognize threats to safety and be prepared to take prompt remedial action.

Youth Protection concerns should be dealt with as promptly as possible in whatever manner is most appropriate to ensure the safety of everyone at the event. This may involve contacting event security, police, local youth protection authorities, management of the hosting entity, and/or parents and guardians.

Safety concerns may even require shutting down an event (e.g., power outage or health concern). *FIRST* requires that all safety concerns be reported to the party conducting the event and to *FIRST* Headquarters.

EVENT SPECIFIC RISKS

Crowd and Open Environment Risks

- Large events include individuals who are not screened or trained.
- Youth participants may be exposed to unfamiliar adults.

Mitigation:

- ✔ Use visible team identifiers (badges, shirts).
- ✔ Establish meeting points.
- ✔ Maintain supervision in high-traffic areas.

Digital and Social Media at Events

- ✔ Avoid private messaging with youth participants during events.
- ✔ Use team or event communication channels.
- ✔ Do not share location or personal details publicly in real time.

Lost or Missing Youth Protocol

- ✔ Immediately notify event staff and security.
- ✔ Activate event response procedures.
- ✔ Do not delay reporting while searching independently.

REPORTING AT EVENTS

All Youth Protection concerns at events must be reported immediately through:

- Event leadership or designated safety lead.
- *FIRST* Youth Protection channels (Reporting Portal).
- Emergency services when required.

Event staff must not delay reporting while attempting to independently investigate concerns.

Appendix G: Guidelines for Parents/ Guardians

FIRST® is committed to providing every youth participant with a safe, respectful, and positive experience. Parents and guardians play an important role in supporting youth safety and well-being. This appendix provides practical guidance to help families understand expectations and support safe participation.

This appendix supplements, but does not replace, the *FIRST* Youth Protection Program requirements outlined in the core guide.

Get Involved

Parents and guardians are encouraged to stay engaged in their child's team experience. Involvement may include:

- Getting to know the Lead coach, mentors, and other adults working with the team.
- Becoming familiar with where and how the team meets.
- Attending meetings or events when possible.
- Communicating with other parents/guardians.

Your presence and awareness can help reinforce a safe and respectful team environment.

Understand Youth Safety in *FIRST*®

FIRST Youth Protection includes measures such as adult screening and training, clear behavioral expectations, supervision standards, and reporting processes designed to promote youth safety.

Parents and guardians do not need to determine whether a situation is a violation — concerns should be reported.

Recognizing Signs of Concern

Parents and guardians are often the first to notice changes in a child's behavior. While these signs may have many causes, they can sometimes indicate that a youth participant is experiencing stress, harm, or inappropriate interactions.

Potential signs may include:

- Sudden changes in mood, behavior, or engagement.
- Withdrawal from activities or peers.
- Reluctance to attend team activities or interact with certain individuals.
- Unexplained injuries or complaints.
- Increased secrecy or changes in communication patterns.
- Age-inappropriate language or behavior.

DIGITAL AWARENESS

Parents and guardians should remain aware of their child's online interactions related to team activities.

Encourage your child to:

- Keep personal information private.
- Avoid communicating with unknown individuals.
- Tell a trusted adult if they receive messages that feel inappropriate or unrelated to team activities.

These signs are not definitive proof of abuse; however, concerning patterns should be taken seriously and may warrant further attention or reporting.

Adults working with teams should not engage in private or non-transparent communication with youth outside appropriate contexts. Parents may request to be included in communications where appropriate.

See Appendix F: Best Practices for Online Communication Platforms and Digital Interaction for additional guidance.



HELPING YOUR CHILD BUILD SAFE BOUNDARIES

Parents and guardians can help youth participants recognize and respond to unsafe situations by reinforcing the following:

- Encourage your child to tell you (or another trusted adult) if something does not feel right.
- Remind your child that no one should ask them to keep secrets about interactions or behavior.
- Encourage your child to trust their instincts and remove themselves from uncomfortable situations.
- Reinforce that their privacy should be respected at all times.
- Make clear that unwanted physical contact is not acceptable.
- Identify trusted adults your child can go to for help.

Discuss with your child that even individuals they know, trust, or admire may sometimes behave inappropriately.

Open communication helps children feel comfortable reporting concerns and reduces confusion in difficult situations.

Responding to Disclosures and Other Signs of Abuse

The strongest indication that a child has been abused is the child's own statement that it occurred, but children who have been abused often do not report it, so parents or guardians should be alert for other signs, such as refusing to participate in an activity they once enjoyed, emotional withdrawal, unexplained cuts or bruises, acting out adult sexual behavior, or using language a child that age is unlikely to know. For more specific signs, consult www.childwelfare.gov.

If your child tells you they have experienced or observed what may be abusive behavior, your first reaction can be especially important in helping the child through the ordeal. The following guidelines may help you:

- ✔ **DO** assume that your child is telling you the truth, respect your child's privacy, and take them to a place where the two of you can talk without interruptions or distractions.
- ✔ **DO** reassure your child that they are not to blame for what happened, and that you appreciate being told about the incident and will help to make sure that it will not happen again.
- ✔ **DO** consult your family doctor or other child abuse authority about the need for medical care or counseling.
- ✔ **DO** tell a child protection agency or the police what happened and follow their direction regarding confidentiality and notification of the school or organization hosting your child's team and *FIRST* Youth Protection.
- ✖ **DON'T** panic or overreact to your child's disclosure or show alarm or anger.
- ✖ **DON'T** criticize your child or tell your child they misunderstood what happened.
- ✖ **DON'T** express remorse that the child was not more careful, put themselves at risk, or is in any way at fault.
- ✖ **DON'T** attempt to investigate or confront the suspected offender, even if you know the person well.
- ✖ **DON'T** promise confidentiality; explain that you may need to share the information to help keep them safe.

FIRST Youth Protection is available to any individual with concerns about the safety of *FIRST* team members and can be contacted directly if additional information or guidance is needed. *FIRST* Youth Protection will become involved, if necessary, to ensure youth protection concerns are promptly and effectively resolved. With your help, we can provide your child with a safe, enjoyable, and inspiring experience.

If you have concerns about the safety or well-being of a youth participant:

- Report concerns to the Lead coach, hosting organization, and submit a report to the *FIRST* Youth Protection Reporting Portal.
- Contact local child protection authorities or law enforcement when appropriate.
- Do not attempt to investigate independently.

You do not need proof to report a concern.

FIRST Youth Protection is available to provide guidance and support regarding safety concerns. *FIRST* may take action to address risks and ensure a safe environment for participants.

Appendix H: Youth Protection and Safeguarding Checklist for Global Partners

FIRST® recognizes that child safeguarding laws, cultural contexts, and operational realities vary across countries. This checklist is intended as guidance to support international partners in implementing strong safeguarding practices aligned with globally recognized standards.

While not all elements may be required or feasible in every jurisdiction, partners are expected to implement child safeguarding measures to the fullest extent permitted by local laws, regulations, and customs.

Safeguarding is a shared responsibility. *FIRST*, partners, coaches, mentors, event volunteers, parents, and communities all play a role in creating safe environments for youth participants.

Safe Recruitment and Screening of Adults Working with Youth

- Ensure all adults (staff, event volunteers, mentors, coaches) interacting with children to complete a written application or online registration.
- Conduct reference checks and verify identity for all youth-facing roles, where feasible and appropriate under local practices.
- Implement criminal background checks or equivalent vetting, as permitted by local customs and laws.
- Require signed ***FIRST*** Code of Conduct acknowledging behavior expectations with youth.
- Ensure individuals understand and acknowledge safeguarding expectations prior to engaging with youth participants.

Mandatory Youth Protection Training

- Provide regular child safeguarding training to all adults interacting with youth.
- Training must include:
  1. Definitions and examples of abuse and neglect.
  2. Appropriate adult/youth boundaries.
  3. How to respond to suspicions or reports.
  4. Reporting obligations and procedures.
  5. Training should be appropriate to local context, language, and cultural considerations.
  6. Training should include how to escalate concerns within the partner organization and to *FIRST*.

Policies and Reporting Mechanisms

- Maintain a written child protection policy tailored to your organization and country's customs, laws, and regulations.
- Designate at least one trained Child Safeguarding Focal Point in your organization.
- Ensure children and adults know how to report concerns safely, and where possible, confidentially.
- Clearly display or share local emergency and child protection reporting contacts.
- Reporting pathways should include both local mechanisms and escalation to *FIRST* Youth Protection where applicable.



Reporting and Incident Response

- Respond to all concerns or allegations promptly, respectfully, and in line with legal obligations.
- Report abuse to local child protection authorities or police, when required.
- Notify *FIRST*'s Youth Protection Team of serious incidents related to youth safety, consistent with local mandatory reporting requirements and applicable laws.

Child-Centered Practices

- Promote welcoming, respectful environments where all children feel safe and valued.
- Obtain parent/guardian consent for participation and media use.
- Avoid one-on-one, unobservable interactions between adults and youth.
- Encourage child participation in shaping safe program environments.
- Promote interactions that are observable and interruptible.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Support

- Provide access to mental health resources or local helplines where available.
- Share age-appropriate materials on wellbeing and resilience.
- Support safe reintegration if youth return after incidents of harm or stress.
- Encourage adults to recognize signs of distress and seek appropriate support.
- Ensure escalation pathways exist when a youth may be at risk of harm to themselves or others.

Local Adaptation and Accountability

- Regularly review safeguarding practices to align with local laws and international standards (e.g., Keeping Children Safe, UNICEF, WHO).
- Translate key safeguarding materials into local languages as needed.
- Ensure senior leadership commitment to safeguarding and monitoring compliance.
- Participate in audits or review of child safeguarding training or policies when requested by *FIRST* or other stakeholders.
- Maintain documentation of safeguarding practices, training, and reported concerns were permitted by law.

Appendix I: Youth Protection Contacts and Agencies

FIRST® Youth Protection Contact

FIRST® Youth Protection is available to provide guidance and receive reports regarding concerns related to youth safety, including suspected abuse or neglect, grooming, boundary violations, inappropriate adult-youth interactions, harassment, exploitation, retaliation, and other conduct that may place a youth participant at risk.

***FIRST* Reporting Portal:** http://firstinspires.org/report

Email: safety@firstinspires.org

Phone: (603) 206-2050

Mental Health and Crisis Support

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE – UNITED STATES AND U.S. TERRITORIES

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline provides free, confidential support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Individuals can call, text, or use online chat to connect with a trained crisis counselor. A person does not need to be experiencing suicidal thoughts to contact 988; support is available for a range of mental health and emotional concerns.

Call or text: 988

Website: https://988lifeline.org/

FIND A HELPLINE – GLOBAL

Find A Helpline provides information about verified emotional support and crisis helplines in more than 175 countries. Individuals can search by country and type of support to identify available local resources, including phone, text, and online chat options.

Website: https://findahelpline.com/

Child Safety and Protection Resources

CHILDHELP

Childhelp provides crisis intervention, information, resources, and referrals related to child abuse and child safety. Childhelp is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Phone or text: 1-800-422-4453 (1-800-4-A-CHILD)

Website: https://childhelp.org/

NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN (NCMEC)

NCMEC provides resources related to missing and exploited children and operates the CyberTipline for reporting suspected online child exploitation.

Phone: 1-800-843-5678 (1-800-THE-LOST)

Website: https://www.missingkids.org/home

NATIONAL SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESOURCE CENTER (NSVRC)

NSVRC provides information, resources, and referrals related to sexual violence prevention and response. NSVRC maintains directories of state and territorial organizations and local resources that provide support to survivors.

Phone: 1-877-739-3895

Website: https://www.nsvrc.org/

PREVENT CHILD ABUSE AMERICA

Prevent Child Abuse America provides information, research, toolkits, and other resources focused on preventing child abuse and neglect and supporting children, families, and communities.

Website: https://preventchildabuse.org/

Canada – Provincial and Territorial Child Protection Resources

Child protection services in Canada are administered primarily by provincial and territorial governments. Requirements, reporting obligations, and child protection processes vary by jurisdiction.

For information about provincial and territorial child protection laws and policies, consult current Government of Canada resources and the applicable provincial or territorial child protection authority.

Resource:
https://cwrp.ca/provincial-and-territorial-assistance

International Child Protection Resources

For concerns arising outside the United States and Canada, individuals should contact the appropriate local child protection authority, law enforcement agency, or other designated safeguarding authority in accordance with applicable local laws and requirements.

Resource:
https://www.icmec.org/edportal/international-law/

FIRST expects individuals participating in *FIRST* programs to comply with applicable local youth protection and safeguarding requirements. *FIRST* Youth Protection should also be notified of concerns involving youth participants in accordance with *FIRST* YPP.

Important

If a youth participant is in immediate danger, contact the appropriate emergency services or local authorities.

External resources may change their services, contact information, or availability. Individuals should consult the applicable organization's website for the most current information.



***FIRST*® Youth Protection Program (YPP)**

Report a Concern

***FIRST*® Youth Protection**

200 Bedford Street • Manchester, NH 03101 • www.firstinspires.org

(603) 206-2050 • safety@firstinspires.org

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