



REPORTING POLICY

Every East Grand Rapids Parks & Recreation Department (“EGRPRD”) staff member, employee, coach, instructor, official, contractor, and/or volunteer must report:

- (1) violations of the Participant Safety Handbook
- (2) misconduct as defined in Participant Safety Handbook
- (3) suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse

As a matter of policy, the “EGRPRD” does not investigate suspicions or allegations of child physical or sexual abuse or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations as a condition for reporting to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Reporting Child Physical or Sexual Abuse

Staff members, employees, coaches, instructors, officials, contractors and/or volunteers of the “EGRPRD” are required to report suspicions or allegations of child sexual abuse by anyone associated with our department, to:

- (1) “EGRPRD” supervisor
- (2) an “EGRPRD” administrator
- (3) where applicable, appropriate law enforcement authorities

Grooming

Because sexual abusers “groom” children for abuse – the process used by offenders to select a child, to win the child’s trust (and the trust of the child’s parent or guardian), to manipulate the child into sexual activity and to keep the child from disclosing abuse – it is possible that a staff member and/or volunteer may witness behavior intended to groom a child for sexual abuse. All questions or concerns related to inappropriate, suspicious or suspected grooming behavior should be directed to an “EGRPRD” supervisor or administrator.

Peer-to-Peer Sexual Abuse

Approximately 1/3 of all child sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children and the obligation to report extends to peer-to-peer child sexual abuse. Whether or not a sexual interaction between children constitutes child sexual abuse turns on the existence of an aggressor, the age difference between the children, and/or whether there is an imbalance of power or intellectual capabilities. If you have any concerns that an interaction between children may constitute sexual abuse, report it to the appropriate law enforcement authorities and an “EGRPRD” supervisor immediately.

Reporting Misconduct and Policy Violations

If a staff member, employee, coach, instructor, official, contractor, parent and/or volunteer receives an allegation or observes misconduct or other inappropriate behavior, such as grooming, that is not reportable to the appropriate law enforcement authorities, it is the responsibility of staff member, employee, coach, instructor, official, contractor, parent and/or volunteer to report their observations to:

- (1) their immediate supervisor
- (2) Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation
- (3) Director of Parks & Recreation

The “EGRPRD” also encourages member parents, athletes and other sport or program participants to communicate violations of the Participant Safety Handbook and/or allegations and suspicions of child physical and sexual abuse to our department.

A staff member, employee, coach, instructor, official, contractor, and/or volunteer may, and in many cases must, report any allegation of child physical or sexual abuse to relevant law enforcement authorities.

How to Report

The “EGRPRD” will take a report in the way that is most comfortable for the person initiating a report including an anonymous, in-person, verbal, written or online report. Regardless of how you choose to report, it is helpful to the “EGRPRD” for individuals to provide, at a minimum, (1) the name of the complainant(s); (2) the type of misconduct alleged and the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct.

Reporting Form

You can report by using our online form at www.eastgr.org

Go to the Parks & Recreation page on the City website

Individuals reporting child physical or sexual abuse or other misconduct may complete an Misconduct Incident Reporting Form. Information on this form will include:

- 1) the name(s) of the complainant(s)
- 2) the type of misconduct alleged
- 3) the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct
- 4) the approximate dates and times the misconduct was committed
- 5) the names of other individuals who might have information regarding the alleged misconduct
- 6) a summary statement of the reasons to believe that misconduct has occurred

The “EGRPRD” will withhold the complainant’s name on request, to the extent permitted by law.

A copy of the Misconduct Incident Reporting Form can be found at:

www.eastgr.org

CONFIDENTIALITY, ANONYMOUS REPORTING AND BAD-FAITH ALLEGATIONS

Confidentiality

To the extent permitted by law, and as appropriate, the “EGRPRD” will keep confidential the complainant’s name on request, not make public the names of potential victims, the accused perpetrator or the people who made a report of child physical and sexual abuse to the authorities.

Anonymous Reporting

The “EGRPRD” recognizes it can be difficult for a participant or athlete, teammate, friend or family member to report an allegation of misconduct and strives to remove as many barriers to reporting as possible. Anonymous reports may be made without the formality of completing a Misconduct Incident Reporting Form:

- by completing the Misconduct Incident Reporting Form without including their name
- by expressing concerns verbally to an “EGRPRD”
- through email, texts or notes left for an “EGRPRD” staff member

However, anonymous reporting may make it difficult for us to investigate or properly address allegations.

All suspicions of child physical or sexual abuse will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

“Whistleblower” Protection

Regardless of outcome, we will support the complainant(s) and his or her right to express concerns in good faith. Our Department will not encourage, allow or tolerate attempts from any individual to retaliate, punish, allow or in any way harm any individual(s) who reports a concern in good faith. Such actions against a complainant will be considered a violation of our Participant Safety Handbook and grounds for disciplinary action.

Bad-Faith Allegations

A report of abuse, misconduct or policy violations that is malicious, frivolous or made in bad-faith is prohibited. Such reports will be considered a violation of our Participant Safety Handbook and grounds for disciplinary action. Depending on the nature of the allegation, a person making a malicious, frivolous or bad-faith report may also be subject to civil or criminal proceedings.

HOW REPORTS ARE HANDLED

An independent investigation can harm youth and/or interfere with the legal investigative process. The “EGRPRD” and its staff members do not attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of child physical or sexual abuse as a condition for reporting to appropriate law enforcement authorities. As necessary, however, we may ask a few clarifying questions of the minor or person making the report to adequately report the suspicion or allegation to law enforcement authorities.

Immediate Suspension or Termination

When an allegation of child physical or sexual abuse is made against a staff member, employee, coach, instructor, official and/or volunteer, we may immediately remove that individual from contact with any children in the program until the allegation has been investigated by an official agency. As necessary, we may suspend or change the assignment of a staff member, employee, coach, instructor, official and/or volunteer.

A staff member, employee, coach, instructor, official or volunteer’s failure to report to a supervisor is a violation of this policy and grounds for termination of a staff member, employee, and/or dismissal of a coach, instructor, official or volunteer.