

SARATOGA SHREDDERS

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY & PROCEDURES

MARCH 2024

INTRODUCTION

Saratoga Shredders supports the health and development of children and youth through seasonal cycling programs and participation in a safe and supportive cycling community. The purpose of this document is to outline Saratoga Shredders Child Protection Policy and all related procedures.

Saratoga Shredders believes that with effective and repeated articulation of policies and procedures, and a collaborative relationship between all stakeholders (including children, parents/guardians, volunteers, staff, contractors, and The Board of Directors) we minimize risks associated with participation in our program.

The scope of this document pertains both to the daily safe operations of Saratoga Shredders events, such as riding programs, clinics, summer camps and races, and also to overarching organizational safeguards. Additionally, these policies provide guidance on how to respond to possible policy violations along with concerns about child abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Saratoga Shredders adheres to all local, state, and federal laws prohibiting abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children. Adherence to this policy is a mandatory requirement for all stakeholders.

CORE PRINCIPLES

Child Safety is a paramount core value of Saratoga Shredders. Saratoga Shredders has adopted the following principles as part of this policy, and they are incorporated wherever relevant.

- Saratoga Shredders trains and advises all Volunteers, Employees, Contractors, and Directors (collectively hereafter “the Organization”) that the welfare of children is our first priority.
- The Organization recognize that all children, regardless of their color, religion, spirituality, sex, ethnicity, native language, national origin or ancestry, age, ability, status, citizenship, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, health status, or any other identity has the right to protection from abuse as well as other protections and rights afforded children under local, state and federal law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

- All members of the Organization are committed to creating and maintaining an environment which mitigates physical, emotional and psychological harm and prevents all forms of neglect, abuse, and exploitation of children.
- All reasonable suspicions or allegations of unsafe practices, abuse, or exploitation of children and youth will be taken seriously and responded to immediately.
- All forms of abuse, or exploitation of children by members of the Organization constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment and/or professional association with the Organization and are subject to law enforcement referral.
- Any reported concern will be thoroughly investigated by the Organization and/or independent third parties including law enforcement as outlined in the “investigating and reporting” section below.
- Failure to report any suspected neglect, abuse, or exploitation of children may be grounds for termination of employment and/or professional association with the Organization.

AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

The Organization takes steps to promote organizational child protection awareness and advocacy. These steps include the following:

- Child protection awareness is incorporated into all stages of Saratoga Shredders operations, including the onboarding and training of all Volunteers, Staff, Contractors, and Directors or any organizational representative who will 1) come into direct contact with children served by the Organization or 2) encounter sensitive data regarding children and youth.
- This policy is reviewed and signed on an annual basis by all members of the Organization.

ON-THE-BIKE PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Saratoga Shredders uses cycling as its primary program activity and the Organization promotes best practices and inter-rider communication for cycling safety on trails and roads. Program safety is classified into two categories, 1) Ensuring every participating child is accounted for all the time, and 2) Working to build emotionally and physically safe environments for participation. In addition, Saratoga Shredders adds the following safe practices to its programs:

- Saratoga Shredders uses “TeamSnap” (or comparable, which is a digital platform) for program communications on a daily and weekly basis and parents are asked to utilize the platform. Members of the Organization are encouraged to use “TeamSnap” exclusively to communicate with their teams, and are prohibited from communicating digitally with any individual child, unless that child’s parent/guardian is also included in the communication.

- Saratoga Shredders carefully considers spaces and manages traffic for safe rider drop off and pick up. Saratoga Shredders asks Children, Parents and Guardians, to know and follow directions for each drop off and pick up location. Directions are subject to change based on usage and current conditions.
- The Organization ensures children are picked up by a pre-approved parent or guardian. Parents or guardians are asked to advise Shredders Staff or Coaches in advance if a child is carpooling or being picked up by someone other than a parent or guardian.
- Saratoga Shredders always ride in groups and all riders are required to have a “ride buddy” assigned at the start of a ride on every ride.
- The Organization has zero tolerance for chastising or bullying and works to promote an encouraging, supportive environment.
- All Saratoga Shredders ride groups of 4 or more have a ride coach or at near the front and at the back of the group acting as “Sweep.” Groups of 3 or less may ride with a single coach or volunteer, who will keep the group together and ride at the back of the group. To reiterate, there is always an adult at the back of the group, no matter how many coaches are riding with the group.
- During all rides, coaches carry an Emergency Action Plan for each trail location, which includes the names and phone numbers of Shredder's Parents or Guardians and emergency response services, trail maps, a light, cell phone and a radio, during a ride.
- Coaches are all trained in basic first aid and all ride groups carry a first aid kit. Most Head Coaches are First-Aid certified or Wilderness First-Aid certified.
- For trail locations without bathroom facilities, there will be instances in which children will request to use the bathroom in the woods. During these instances, children are required to remain within earshot of their coach, however, for privacy reasons, they are permitted to be physically alone momentarily.
- Program staff ensure coaches are equipped for every ride and carry extra gear to rides for distribution if necessary.

SAFE PEOPLE PRACTICES

All stakeholders are required to understand both the importance of, and their own responsibility in upholding and implementing this policy. All members of the Organizations are trained at least once annually and attest to their knowledge and compliance with these policies as part of each riding season’s registration process.

Saratoga Shredders is committed to child-safe recruitment, selection, and screening practices to ensure that the organization does not employ or retain people who pose a risk to children. Saratoga Shredders requires all members of the Organization to satisfactorily complete a background check and to be prepared to support the funding of background checks if necessary.

- Children are always supervised. We keep riding groups together at all times.
- All program participants will be given a brightly colored Shredders Jersey and encouraged to wear while riding to improve visibility of participants.
- All members of the Organization are vigilant and advise other stakeholders of strange or suspicious persons in and around Shredders program areas.

Any violation of the policy (including any suspected or known neglect, abuse, or exploitation) must be reported directly to any or all of the following persons: Executive Director, Coach Coordinator, Programs Director, or Board of Directors Chair. All members of the Organization are required to report immediately any of the following:

- Any reasonable cause to believe a child in the care of Saratoga Shredders has been neglected, abused, or exploited at the hands of a Saratoga Shredders Employee, Member of the Board of Directors, Volunteer or Contractor.
- Behavior by any member of the Organization that breaches this policy.
- Inappropriate use of Saratoga Shredders technology including but not limited to social media, computers, cell phones, and photographic equipment to view, record or engage in any other activities related to the abuse of a child.
- Any involvement in any situation where one's actions could be misinterpreted as potential disregard for safety, or if a member of the Organization does not report an incident or any reasonable suspicion of child neglect, abuse or exploitation, their relationship with Saratoga Shredders may be suspended or terminated.

INVESTIGATING AND REPORTING PROCEDURE

Any violation of this policy including any suspected or known neglect, abuse or exploitation must be reported immediately. Any member of the Organization who receives a report of violation must immediately advise either the Executive Director, Coach Coordinator, or the Program Director, and at least one member of the Board of Directors in writing.

- All reports of policy violations will be handled professionally and expediently.
- The Executive Director, Programs Director and the Board of Directors Chair will first determine whether the issue, as reported, constitutes an allegation of physical abuse or sexual contact, and if

so, will refer the allegation to law enforcement and no investigation will be performed by the the Organization.

- If the Executive Director, Programs Director, or Board Chair are the subject of a possible violation, that person will be recused in favor of another staff person or Director.
- Any member of the Organization who is the subject of an investigative process will be suspended until the completion of the process, at which point, they will be reinstated or dismissed.
- In instances in which an allegation is not referred to law enforcement or has been declined or unsubstantiated by law enforcement, an ad hoc investigative committee will be established by the Board of Directors. At the conclusion of the committee's review, the committee will provide a written confidential summary of their findings and a proposed recommendation for further action. The Board of Directors will make all final determinations as to appropriate outcomes.
- In all reports reviewed by the ad hoc investigative committee, every effort will be made to keep the names of minors and any party involved confidential. The rights and welfare of the child are Saratoga Shredders' primary importance. Every effort will be made to protect the rights and safety of the child throughout any investigation.
- All reports made in good faith are viewed as made in the best interests of the child, regardless of the outcomes of any investigation. The Organization will safeguard the interests of the reporting person and will take reasonable steps to protect reporters from retaliation.
- Any Saratoga Shredders representative who intentionally makes false or malicious allegations will face disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Declaration of Commitment to Saratoga Shredders Child Protection Policy

(To be signed by all Volunteers, Staff, Contractors, and Members of the Board of Directors)

I, _____, acknowledge that on _____ (date), I received a copy of Saratoga Shredders Child Protection Policy and that I read it, understood it, and agree to comply with it. I understand that Saratoga Shredders has the maximum discretion permitted by law to interpret, administer, change, modify, or delete this policy at any time without notice. No statement or representation by a supervisor or manager or any other employee, whether oral or written, can supplement or modify this policy. I also understand that any delay or failure by Saratoga Shredders to enforce any policy or rule will not constitute a waiver of Saratoga Shredders right to do so in the future. I understand that neither this policy nor any other communication by a management representative or any other employee, whether oral or written, is intended in any way to create a contract of employment. I understand that, unless I have a written employment agreement signed by an authorized Saratoga Shredder representative, I am engaged at will and this policy does not modify my at-will status. If I have a written employment agreement signed by an authorized Saratoga Shredders representative and this policy conflicts with the terms of my employment agreement, I understand that the terms of my employment agreement will control.

I declare that I have not been charged or convicted of any offense involving psychological, emotional, physical, or sexual neglect, abuse, or exploitation of a child or youth.

_____ (Yes/No)

I understand that I am required to immediately report to the Executive Director, Coach Coordinator or Program Director any accusation of child neglect, abuse, or exploitation made against me.

_____ (Yes/No)

I understand that if a complaint is brought against me regarding the neglect, abuse, or exploitation of persons, the allegation will be investigated in cooperation with the appropriate authorities and legal counsel.

_____ (Yes/No)

I understand that Saratoga Shredders may terminate me and/or end any association with me if there is a reason to believe that I engaged in any offense involving psychological, emotional, physical, or sexual neglect, abuse, or exploitation.

_____ (Yes/No)

I understand that if I do not report reasonable suspicions of child neglect, abuse, or exploitation, I may also suffer consequences, including termination.

_____ (Yes/No)

_____ Signature

_____ Printed Name

_____ Role

_____ Date