Emerge Academy is committed to creating a safe and positive environment for all coaches, staff, volunteers, athletes and parents, as well as, promoting an environment that is free of misconduct. Therefore, the following Policy has been set forth to promote a safe gymnastics environment, both solely and in partnership with other necessary parties, including staff, volunteers, parents, and athletes.

Emerge Academy has “zero tolerance” for abuse, including inappropriate behavior and sexual misconduct, in its programs, activities and events. All coaches, staff and volunteers shall abide by and adhere to all Emerge Academy policies, standards, rules, procedures and guidelines pertaining to safe environments/athlete protection.

**Definition of Abuse**

Abuse, including child abuse, is defined in various sources, such as state statutes, case law, sports organization and professional association codes of conduct and training manuals, corporate and business workplace documents and human rights commission materials. Emerge Academy has not adopted any specific definition of abuse; rather, it has chosen to defer to such general sources and definitions for reference and application, depending upon the circumstances. Nonetheless, in general, the following conduct may be considered abusive:

**Physical Abuse**

1. Any physical contact with a participant that intentionally causes the participant to sustain bodily harm, including without limitation striking, hitting, kicking, biting, shaking, shoving, forcing an athlete to train or compete when injured or mandating excessive exercise as a form of punishment.

2. Any physical contact with a participant that intentionally creates a threat of immediate bodily harm or personal injury.

3. Giving alcohol or inappropriate drugs to a participant.

4. Any violation of applicable law.

Physical contact that is reasonably intended to coach, teach or demonstrate a gymnastics skill or to prevent or lessen injury (e.g., spotting, catching) does not constitute physical abuse. Infrequent, non-intentional physical contact particularly that which arises out of error on the part of the gymnast or coach does not constitute physical abuse.

**Sexual Abuse**

1. Rape, incest, fondling, exhibitionism or sexual exploitation.

2. Any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching, unwanted physical contact, unwelcome advances or requests for sexual favors.

3. Any form of wanton or obscene gesturing, lewd remarks or indecent exposure.

4. Sexual abuse of a minor includes without limitation:

– Touching a minor participant for the purpose of causing the sexual arousal or gratification of either person.

– A minor participant touching any person, if the touching occurs at the request of or with the consent of such other person, for the sexual arousal or gratification of either person.

5. Neither consent of the participant to the sexual abuse or contact, mistake as to the participant’s age, nor the fact that the sexual contact did not take place at a gymnastics function is a defense to a complaint of sexual abuse.

6. Sexual abuse also includes sexual misconduct described in the USA Gymnastics Code of Ethical Conduct, including:

– Soliciting or engaging in sexual relations with any minor.

– Engaging in any behavior that utilizes the influence of a professional member’s position as coach, judge or administrator to encourage sexual relations with an athlete.

– Engaging in sexual harassment by making unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature where such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

7. Any violation of applicable law involving sexual misconduct or child abuse, or that is specifically designed to protect minors.