

# Your Student's Safety Matters

**WHAT IS YOUTH PROTECTION?** The *FIRST*® Youth Protection Program (YPP) sets standards of behavior for adults and youth participating in *FIRST*, raises awareness about how to foster safe environments and provides ways to report concerns and issues about safety.



- **Your Role:** We encourage you as parents/guardians of *FIRST* participants to familiarize yourself with our [Youth Protection training and policies](#) and to talk with your child about them. Make sure your child knows what types of behaviors are inappropriate and how to report any behavior that makes them feel uncomfortable to a trusted adult.
- **Reporting:** Encourage your child to report any concerns to a trusted adult such as a coach, mentor, event volunteer, event organizer, local *FIRST* partner or organization hosting your team or event (such as a school)
  - You **must** also report a youth protection concern to *FIRST* Headquarters using our [Reporting Portal](#), [email](#), or by calling **(603) 206-2050**.
- **Code of Conduct:** Review the [FIRST Code of Conduct](#) with your child and make sure they understand the importance of following the code to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone.
- Help your child learn to **identify and report inappropriate behavior** and take actions to keep themselves safe
  - Encourage your child to tell you (or another trusted adult) if anyone asks them to keep things they have said or done a secret, or to tell you if anyone offers them special favors, invitations, gifts, or money.
  - Encourage your child to trust their instincts and feelings. If an activity doesn't feel right, they should not participate; discuss possible scenarios with your child and ways to firmly say "no thank-you" and move to a safer setting; discuss what your child will be comfortable saying if this situation arises.
  - Tell your child to make sure their privacy is respected.
  - Tell your child to say "no" to unwanted touching or affection.
  - Tell your child that, if any of these things happen, to call you (or another trusted adult) and ask to be brought to a safe place.
- **If your child discloses a concern to you:** If your child tells you they have experienced or observed what may be inappropriate or abusive behavior, your first reaction can be very important in helping them 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.
    - 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.
    - consult your family doctor or other child abuse authority about the need for medical care or counseling.
    - notify a child protection agency or the police in matters of child abuse or neglect.
    - notify 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.
    - criticize your child or tell your child they misunderstood what happened.
    - express remorse that the child wasn't more careful, put themselves at risk, or is in any way at fault.
    - attempt to investigate or confront the suspected offender, even if you know the person well.



24/7 call, text and chat access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing suicidal, substance use, and/or mental health crisis, or any other kind of emotional distress.

**REPORT A CONCERN**

