



A. Why You Should Know About SafeSport

- SafeSport exists to protect athletes from abuse and misconduct in sports that connect to the Olympic movement and many youth clubs.
- It sets rules (like MAAPP) about one-on-one interactions, travel, electronic communication, and locker rooms to reduce risk before harm happens.
- SafeSport also receives and investigates reports of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, and can restrict or ban adults from participating in sport.

Student discussion questions:

- Why might it be empowering for young athletes and families to know these systems exist instead of assuming “nothing can be done”?
- How is knowing about SafeSport different from putting the burden on kids to “fix” unsafe adults?

B. Issues and Cultural Gaps in SafeSport

- Many athletes and advocates argue that SafeSport’s process can be slow, confusing, and emotionally draining, especially for young people.
- A significant number of cases are closed without formal sanctions, sometimes labeled “administratively closed” or “insufficient evidence,” which can feel like nothing happened even when the athlete took a big risk to report.
- Education materials often use a “one-size-fits-all” approach and do not always address how race, culture, language, immigration status, disability, or LGBTQ+ identity shape risk and safety.
- Athletes from marginalized backgrounds have described feeling less believed, less protected, and less represented in SafeSport’s materials and processes.
- Does not teach about cultural norms and differences.



Student prompts:

- Who might feel most comfortable filing a formal report with a national body? Who might feel least comfortable? Why?
- How could language barriers, fear of retaliation, or immigration concerns change whether someone uses SafeSport at all?

C. Mishandled Cases and Power Dynamics

- Past cases in swimming and other sports have revealed patterns: reports ignored for years, powerful coaches protected, and young athletes labeled as “liars” or “troublemakers.”
- Sometimes adults worry that cases will be “too messy to deal with,” might damage a program’s reputation, or cost money and time, which can lead to minimization or silence.
- Common dismissive phrases include “she is lying,” “he just wants attention,” “it’s a misunderstanding,” or “we don’t want drama,” which can shut down valid concerns.
- Power dynamics in sport mean that a coach’s word, or a winning program’s reputation, can carry more weight than a young person’s lived experience.

Activity idea: Shuffling game / Printouts

- Give students a list of real-sounding phrases from past reports.
- In small groups, students sort them into:
 - “Protects the athlete,”
 - “Protects the adult/program,”
 - “Not sure – depends on context.”
- Have students rewrite harmful phrases into safer, athlete-centered responses.



D. Cultural Gaps: What Gets Missed

- In many Asian and Asian-American families, norms of modesty, respect for elders, and not “making trouble” can make it harder to question a coach or report harm.
- Students may worry about bringing shame to their family or community, or fear that adults at school will not understand cultural context.
- Stereotypes like the “model minority” image of Asian-American students as quiet, compliant, and high-achieving can make adults overlook signs of distress or assume “they’re fine.”
- SafeSport and school systems often do not fully address these cultural realities, leading to invisible barriers in the reporting process.

Student prompts:

- How might you feel if the first reaction to your report is, “But you’re such a good kid, are you sure?”
- What would a culturally responsive system look like for you or for Asian-American swimmers specifically?

E. How Wave Conscious Is Different

- Wave Conscious is designed to be youth-centered and culturally aware, especially for Asian and Asian-American swimmers.
- Instead of starting with policies and legal language, it starts with feelings, everyday situations at practice, and the specific pressures of swim culture.
- It makes it easier to translate “something feels off” into clear language and next steps, offering guidance for talking to parents, trusted adults, school systems, and, when appropriate, SafeSport or law enforcement.
- Wave Conscious recognizes that not every swimmer feels equally safe, so it highlights identity-specific concerns and offers tailored examples and scripts.



- Wave Conscious tries to help those affected by providing legal help and mental support, not just a platform for reporting.
- It aims to complement, not replace, formal systems like SafeSport and Title IX by filling gaps in cultural understanding, emotional support, and early prevention.

Student/coach reflection questions:

- What tools or supports would make it easier for you to speak up early, before something becomes an emergency?
- How could Wave Conscious be built so it feels useful to you personally (e.g., anonymous check-ins, scripts, visuals, language options, parent guides)?