

Section 1 – Child Safety & Volunteer Policies

1.0 Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish comprehensive standards and procedures designed to protect the safety, welfare, and well-being of all minor participants, and to ensure that all volunteers meet appropriate standards of conduct, eligibility, and accountability. These policies are intended to reduce risk, promote a safe organizational environment, and ensure compliance with applicable laws and governing league requirements.

This Section applies to all directors, officers, commissioners, coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, volunteers, and any other individuals acting on behalf of the organization (collectively, “Volunteers”). These policies govern all organization-sponsored activities, including but not limited to practices, games, events, travel, communications, and use of facilities.

1.1 Volunteer Screening and Background Check Policy

All Volunteers serving in roles involving interaction with minor participants or access to sensitive organizational resources shall be subject to screening and background check requirements as a condition of service.

All background checks required under this Policy shall be conducted through a Board-approved screening provider that utilizes Texas state-recognized criminal history databases, including, where applicable, records maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety Crime Records Division. The organization may also utilize a third-party consumer reporting agency that aggregates state and national records, provided such agency complies with applicable federal and state law.

- **Covered Positions.** Positions subject to screening include, but are not limited to, coaches, assistant coaches, board members, and any Volunteer with regular or repeated contact with minor participants.
- **Pre-Service Requirement.** No Volunteer shall be permitted to begin service until all required screening has been completed and approved.
- **Re-Screening.** Background checks shall be conducted at the start of every sport season, prior to the start of practices.
- **Disclosure of Pending Matters.** Volunteers shall promptly disclose any pending criminal charges or investigations; the organization reserves the right to suspend eligibility pending resolution.
- **Disqualifying Offenses.** The following offenses shall result in disqualification, subject to applicable look-back periods:
 - **Permanent Disqualification:** Any conviction involving sexual offenses, crimes against children, or violent felonies.

- **Ten (10)-Year Look-Back:** Felony offenses involving violence, assault, or distribution of controlled substances.
- **Five (5)-Year Look-Back:** Misdemeanor offenses involving assault, domestic violence, drug possession, or endangerment.
- **Discretionary Review:** Other offenses may be evaluated by the Board based on severity, recency, and relevance to youth safety.
- **Confidentiality.** All screening information shall be treated as confidential and maintained in secure records accessible only to authorized individuals.
- **Adverse Action.** In the event of denial or removal based on screening results, the Volunteer shall be provided written notice and, where applicable, an opportunity to respond, appeal, or correct inaccuracies in accordance with established procedures.

1.2 Child Safety and Abuse Prevention Policy

The organization adopts a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, misconduct, and any behavior that compromises the safety of minor participants.

- **Prohibited Conduct.** Prohibited conduct includes, without limitation, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual misconduct, harassment, bullying, hazing, neglect, exploitation, and any inappropriate physical or verbal interaction with a minor.
- **Supervision Requirements.** Volunteers shall ensure appropriate supervision of minor participants at all times during organizational activities.
- **One-on-One Interactions.** One-on-one interactions between a Volunteer and a minor participant shall be avoided where reasonably possible and, if unavoidable, must occur in an observable and interruptible setting.
- **Facility and Locker Room Use.** Volunteers shall not be alone with minors in locker rooms, bathrooms or similar private areas and shall comply with all supervision and privacy protocols established by the organization.
- **Electronic Communications.** Communications with minors shall be professional in nature, limited to legitimate organizational purposes, and conducted in a manner that includes or is transparent to a parent or guardian where appropriate. Private, secretive, or inappropriate communications are strictly prohibited.
- **Transportation.** Volunteers shall not transport minor participants without prior authorization from a parent or guardian and, where applicable, the organization.
- **Mandatory Reporting.** Any Volunteer who becomes aware of suspected abuse, neglect, or misconduct shall immediately report such concerns to appropriate governmental authorities as required by law and shall also notify designated organizational leadership.

1.3 Volunteer Eligibility and Disqualification Standards

Eligibility to serve as a Volunteer is contingent upon meeting and maintaining standards

of conduct and suitability established by the organization.

- **Eligibility Requirements.** Volunteers must demonstrate the maturity, integrity, and responsibility necessary to work with minor participants and represent the organization.
- **Disqualification Criteria.** Grounds for disqualification may include:
 - Criminal convictions or conduct involving violence, abuse, or endangerment of minors;
 - Pending criminal charges that raise reasonable safety concerns;
 - Prior disciplinary actions, suspensions, or sanctions imposed by the organization or affiliated leagues;
 - Misconduct involving dishonesty, fraud, or misuse of funds;
 - Failure to complete required training, certifications, or policy acknowledgments.
- **Continuing Obligation.** Volunteers have an ongoing duty to report any change in circumstances that may affect their eligibility.

1.4 Incident Reporting and Response Procedure

The organization shall maintain a structured and timely process for receiving, documenting, and responding to incidents involving participant safety or Volunteer conduct.

- **Reporting Requirements.** Incidents or concerns should be reported promptly and, where practicable, within forty-eight (48) hours of occurrence or discovery.
- **Intake and Documentation.** All reports shall be documented and submitted to the appropriate commissioner or designated officer for review.
- **Immediate Protective Measures.** The organization may take interim actions as necessary to protect participants, including temporary suspension or restriction of a Volunteer's activities.
- **Internal Escalation.** Reports shall be escalated in accordance with organizational hierarchy and conflict-of-interest protocols.
- **Preservation of Evidence.** All relevant documents, communications, and materials shall be preserved.
- **Confidentiality.** Information related to incidents shall be shared only on a need-to-know basis to protect the privacy of involved parties and the integrity of the process.
- **External Referrals.** Where appropriate or required, incidents shall be referred to law enforcement, child protection authorities, insurers, or governing league bodies.

1.5 Volunteer Standards Policy

All Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the

organization's mission, values, and safety priorities.

- **Duty of Care.** Volunteers shall prioritize the safety and well-being of all participants.
- **Professional Conduct.** Volunteers shall act with integrity, respect, and fairness in all interactions.
- **Communications.** All communications shall be appropriate, respectful, and aligned with organizational standards.
- **Event Conduct.** Volunteers shall model good sportsmanship and refrain from the use of profanity, alcohol, tobacco, vaping products or other prohibited substances during organizational activities.
- **Use of Organizational Property.** Volunteers shall use organizational property responsibly and in accordance with established procedures.
- **Compliance Obligation.** Volunteers shall comply with all applicable organizational policies, league rules, and safety requirements
- **Coach Ejection Consequences**
 - **First Ejection:** Suspension for a minimum of one (1) game and mandatory review of conduct expectations through coaches code of conduct.
 - **Second Ejection:** Suspension for the remainder of the season and subject to Board review for possible permanent removal.
- **Probation and Return-to-Service**
 - The Board may impose a probationary period following any disciplinary action.
 - During probation, the individual must comply with all conditions, which may include training or supervision requirements.
 - Failure to comply may result in permanent removal.
 - Return to service following suspension requires Board or commissioner approval.
- **Additional Sanctions.** The organization may impose additional penalties, including suspension, removal, or restriction from future participation, based on severity and frequency of violations.

1.6 Required Training and Certification Policy

Completion of required training, certifications, and application requirements is a condition of service for all Volunteers and a prerequisite to participation in any coaching role.

- **Coach Application Requirements.**

All coaching applicants must be approved prior to assignment and shall submit a complete application that includes:

- Personal identifying information and current contact details;

- Relevant experience, qualifications, and prior coaching history;
- Disclosure of any criminal history and pending charges; and
- Agreeing to comply with Coaches Code of Conduct

Head Coach Eligibility.

- To serve as a head coach, an individual must:
- Be at least twenty-one (21) years of age; and
- Have a child participating on the team they coach, unless an exception is expressly approved by the Board.

1.7 Coaching Structure and Responsibilities

Assistant Coaches.

Assistant coaches serve in a supporting capacity and shall:

- Operate under the direction and supervision of the head coach; and
- Not independently impose discipline or make policy determinations unless expressly authorized by the organization.

Preseason Parent Meeting Requirement.

Each commissioner shall conduct a preseason parent meeting, which must include, at a minimum:

- Team expectations and applicable codes of conduct;
- Practice and game schedules;
- Approved communication methods and protocols; and
- Safety procedures, including injury response and incident reporting requirements.

Official Communication Channels.

GroupMe and official Facebook page shall serve as the primary communication tools to inform participants, parents, and volunteers. Coaches and Volunteers shall:

- Utilize these platforms for schedules, announcements, and updates where applicable;
- Ensure that team-level communications are consistent with information published through official channels; and
- Refrain from using unofficial or private communication methods in a manner that circumvents organizational transparency requirements.

1.8 Required Training and Certification

Mandatory Training.

All Volunteers may require training prior to participation, including:

- Organizational orientation;
- Child safety and abuse prevention training; and

- Any additional training required by the Board or applicable league.

Role-Specific Training.

Certain positions may require additional certifications or training, including but not limited to:

- Concussion awareness training;
- First aid or emergency response training; and
- Sport-specific instruction or league-mandated certifications.

Certification Maintenance.

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining all required certifications in current status and providing documentation upon request.

1.9 Enforcement and Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with application requirements, complete required training, or maintain necessary certifications shall result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension, restriction of duties, or removal from service.