

**Potomac Valley Youth Association, Inc.**

**UNIFORM CODE OF CONDUCT**

**Volunteers/Coaches**

**PVYA PHILOSOPHY**

The mission of the Potomac Valley Youth Association (PVYA) is to organize, supervise, and support wholesome recreational activities for the youth of the Brunswick geographical area as a supplement to existing programs. This purpose may be further fulfilled by providing activities where there is no existing sporting activity or where the activity does not sufficiently provide for all the area's eligible youth an opportunity to participate without regard to race, sex, creed, religion, or national origin.

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Uniform Code of Conduct (UCC) is designed and implemented to support the overall mission of PVYA to ensure the well-being and safety of those whom the association serves: *our children*. The UCC is applicable to all PVYA sports programs and provides guidelines for behavior and responsibilities to players, parents, volunteers, coaches, and officials. The following four areas of emphasis are highlighted:

- I. Youth Protection / Child Abuse
- II. Sportsmanship
- III. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illegal Drugs
- IV. Safety and Health

The Board of Directors of PVYA aim to expose children to a

variety of sports within a fun and safe atmosphere. PVYA hopes that providing these opportunities will foster a deeper appreciation for sports and maintains that adherence to the UCC will assist in the achievement of this goal. For questions or comments regarding the Uniform Code of Conduct, please contact the Sports Commissioner for the sport in which you are registering.

## **I. YOUTH PROTECTION / CHILD ABUSE**

PVYA maintains a zero-tolerance policy when it concerns child abuse. Abuse in sports is defined as any action taken by an adult, which results in the direct or indirect physical and/or emotional harm to a child. Abusive behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- a. Physical – a grab, strike, shove, spank, shake, slap, excessive exercise, or denial of water as means of punishment.
- b. Verbal – any spoken words that humiliate, degrade, and/or threaten; including swearing, name calling, hurtful comments regarding performance and/or overall appearance of a player.
- c. Sexual – any sexually implicit or explicit touching, exposure, or comment.
- d. Mental – conveyance of unrealistic expectations of a child (i.e. winning every game, never making a mistake, performing like a pro, etc.)

PVYA programs should understand that allegations of abuse are taken seriously. An allegation of abuse will result in the immediate suspension of the accused individual(s) pending an investigation by the Board. Status of the suspension may be changed by a unanimous vote of the Board. All

volunteers for PVYA will be subject to a background investigation, which includes a criminal records check,

## **II. SPORTSMANSHIP**

PVYA's stance on good sportsmanship is secondary only to its emphasis on child safety. Each player, parent, coach, and official shares a responsibility to practice good sportsmanship to allow for increased enjoyment and competition for all.

**Players** will in large part follow the example of parents and coaches; however, they are equally accountable for their own behavior. Players in PVYA sports will:

- display a positive attitude on both the practice and game fields
- arrive ready to play with the proper equipment as identified for each sport
- demonstrate respect to coaches, officials, and other players at all times
- abstain from the use of vulgar, obscene, offensive, or derogatory comments
- not argue with an official if a call is disputable
- promptly attend all practices and games unless coaches have been notified in advance
- refrain from the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs at all times
- show respect to other participants without regard to race, religion, nationality, or gender
- report any UCC violation and/or abuse allegation to a trusted adult

**Parents** are models for our children and our players. It is critical that all parents demonstrate good sportsmanship at all times. Parents, guardians, and guests of PVYA participants will:

- follow those standards set forth above for players as applicable
- not embarrass a participant by yelling or reprimanding any player, coach, official, or other parent
- understand the rules of the game and support the officials on and off the field
- applaud effort in both victory and defeat
- abstain from the use of tobacco, alcohol, or drugs while attending a game
- help to provide a safe and fun environment for the participants
- remember that the game is for the kids, not the adults
- know the whereabouts of your children (see Safety and Health)
- inform the coach and/or officials of any special health considerations pertaining to your child(ren) prior to participation
- report any UCC violation and/or abuse allegation to PVYA

**Officials** (volunteer or paid) are the authorities on the courts and fields. Officials should be prompt, alert, and knowledgeable of the rules and regulations for the sport in which they are officiating. Rules are the parameters to ensure a fun and safe experience for participants and spectators. Officials of PVYA games will:

- know the rules of the game
- apply the rules of the game with fairness and consistency
- refrain from showing favoritism
- remain abstinent from the use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco when officiating or participating in any PVYA activity
- follow all guidelines pertaining to child safety
- submit to and meet the requirements of a criminal background check
- report any UCC violation and/or abuse allegation to PVYA

**Coaches** have the ability to instill lifelong memories into the framework of our children's lives; incumbently, they must conduct themselves with the highest of standards when it comes to maintaining the safety and well being of our children. PVYA coaches will:

- avoid any circumstance which places them alone with a child other than their own
- maintain a playing environment that is safe
- incorporate and ensure frequent water breaks as needed
- remain aware of any special considerations regarding members of the team
- provide consistent communication to all players and parents
- obtain the necessary coaching licenses and/or certifications applicable to the sport

- adhere to the Field Use Guidelines established at our fields
- adhere to all rules pertaining to PVYA practice and game participation
- treat ALL players equally, with respect to playing time, mentoring, and enthusiasm **(exception for select teams?)**
- submit to a criminal background check and meet all coaching requirements as defined by PVYA
- report any UCC violation and/or abuse allegation to PVYA Board of Directors

### III. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Illegal Drugs

The use of alcohol, tobacco, and/or illegal drugs by players, parents, coaches, volunteers, and officials during any PVYA sponsored event is prohibited. Violations of this policy will result in an immediate suspension from participation in PVYA activities pending a review by the Board. Coaches and volunteers should remember they are role models for our youth and their actions should be congruent with PVYA's philosophy.

### IV. Safety and Health

PVYA regards safety and health as top priority. The following guidelines should be observed by coaches and volunteers as precautionary measures to ensure the physical safety and well being of PVYA participants:

- inspect all fields and courts prior to any practice or game
- utilize equipment that is PVYA approved, age-appropriate, and free from any defect

- ensure children have access to plenty of water
- stop any practice or game in which weather conditions pose a hazard
- provide basic first aid as needed
- discourage violent play
- follow coaching guidelines set forth by each sport
- keep practice times within the recommended guidelines
- notify PVYA and your local law enforcement agency of any predatory activity associated with PVYA sponsored events

★ Parents are urged to be aware of the potential dangers of child predators within our communities. Please be vigilant in monitoring your children at practices and games. A parental escort, or the buddy-system, should be provided when kids go to the restrooms, concession stands, and/or other facilities that are long distances from the game vicinities. The primary responsibility for the well being of your child(ren) on and off the field lies with the parent/guardian, so please be proactive in watching over your loved ones. A list of registered sex offenders in your area may be accessed online at the following website:

**<http://www.criminalcheck.com/>**

Please notify law enforcement of suspicious behavior. If the suspicious behavior is in conjunction with an PVYA event, PVYA should be promptly notified in order to follow up.