

Floral Park Indians Athletic Association

Code of Conduct and Agreement

Coaches, Board Members, Volunteers

The Floral Park Indians Athletic Association's (Indians) highest priority is the safety and well-being of children participants. This code of conduct and agreement (Code) has been created to help ensure a safe and healthy environment for all children participating with the Indians. It also helps to create a constructive and positive experience and to maintain an enjoyable environment for all members. The Indians will take disciplinary action against anyone participating with the Indians who is found to violate the Indians Code or whose conduct is considered detrimental to the best interests of the children participants. This Code of Conduct is based upon the United States Youth Soccer Organization's Code of Conduct, of which the Indians is a member of.

Indians Coaches, Board Members, and Volunteers must:

1. Place the well-being and safety of each player above all other considerations. Volunteers will not partake in any activity that puts a child's safety or well-being at risk.
2. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of each and every person including players, referees, coaches, parents and everyone involved with the Indians.
3. Treat all children and youth with respect and consideration. Treatment must be fair and equal, and must not be based on sex, race, religion, sexual orientation or economic or social status. All effort must be made to avoid favoritism, or the appearance of favoritism.
4. Strive to be a positive role model and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, officials, and spectators at every game, practice or other sporting event. Not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as, but not limited to, booing and taunting; refusing to shake hands; or using profane language or gestures.
5. Not allow children to be alone at any time with a professional trainer. A Coach or Assistant Coach must be present at all activities run by a professional trainer. In addition, the Board strongly recommends that all Indians activities with children have at least two adults present including practices, scrimmages, games, and car rides. When a one-on-one discussion or counseling is warranted with a child, such interaction should take place in an area that allows for private conversation while remaining in the view of other adults.
6. Not exert undue influence to obtain personal benefit or reward.
7. Demand that child(ren) treat other players, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability. Teach my child(ren) that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my child(ren) will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance. Refrain from yelling at my child(ren) or another child for any reason during/after a game.

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8. Respect the coaches and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches at the game field, and will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
9. Respect the referees and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront them on the game field.
10. Encourage and guide players to accept responsibility for their own behavior and performance.
11. Learn the rules of the game and the policies of the league.
12. Ensure activities are appropriate for the age, maturity, experience and ability of players.
13. Cooperate with other specialists (coaches, officials, doctors, etc.) in the best interests of the player.
14. Promote fair play and behavior and never condone violations of the laws of the Game.
15. Contact parents or guardians of children who become ill, injured, or have a severe disciplinary problem while participating in an Indians activity.

Alcohol and Drugs Policy

16. Not possess, distribute, use or allow others to use any alcohol or drugs. The Indians has a ZERO TOLERANCE ALCOHOL and Drug policy. Coaches or Volunteers or anyone must not hold or participate in practice, game or any Indians activity involving children if under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Abuse Prevention Policy

17. Abide by the Indians' Abuse Prevention Policy. The Indians has ZERO TOLERANCE for any abuse toward players, referees, coaches or anyone. Abuse can be broken down into the following subtypes, all of which are strictly prohibited:

- Physical abuse: Physical punishment or injury inflicted on a child
- Verbal abuse: Harsh or inappropriate language, degrading punishment
- Sexual abuse: Contact or activity of a sexual nature between an adult and a child
- Emotional abuse: Mental or emotional injury inflicted on a child by the actions of an adult
- Neglect: Failure to provide adequate care for a child
- Economic abuse: Deliberate misuse of the money or belongings of a child

Enforcement responsibilities - Coaches and volunteers who supervise other leaders are charged with the diligent enforcement of all children safety policies contained in this Code of Conduct. A violation of these policies can be grounds for immediate dismissal from the Indians.

Reporting Responsibilities – The Indians encourages a culture of communication regarding matters that place children at risk. If you see or suspect inappropriate interaction with or between children, it is your responsibility to report the inappropriate interaction to a coach, supervisor, team official, league official, or Board Member. All reports of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this Code of Conduct and state law, to law enforcement, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

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Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from all Indians activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by law enforcement or child protective agencies. Failure to report a prohibited act as designated in this policy is a violation of this policy and grounds for dismissal or removal.

The Indians does not investigate suspicions or allegations of physical or sexual abuse, or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations, as a condition of reporting suspicions or allegations to appropriate law enforcement authorities. The Indians will comply with all laws requiring a person to make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency if that person has cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect. If a coach or volunteer has cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect, that coach or volunteer can make a report directly to the appropriate reporting authorities or may report to an immediate supervisor, coach, league official, or Board Member, who in turn will report the abuse or neglect. In the event relevant state law requires the individual with the cause to believe that a child may have been abused or neglected to report rather than delegate the responsibility, the individual will comply with the applicable reporting laws.

Prohibited forms of verbal abuse include, without limitation:

- Insulting comments about a particular gender, career, religion, etc. to which the child may belong
- Insulting comments about the child's ideas, behaviors, and/or beliefs
- Insulting comments about people, places or things that are dear to the child
- Talking down to the child, or treating the child as though he or she is "stupid"
- Arguing that the child is "too sensitive" if the child tells the abuser that his or her remarks or actions are demeaning or abusive

Physical Contact with Children Policy

18. Adhere to the Indians Physical Contact with Children Policy. Appropriate physical contact between minor athletes and coaches or volunteers is a productive and inevitable part of sport. Athletes are more likely to acquire advanced physical skills and enjoy their sport participation through appropriate physical contact. However, guidelines for appropriate physical contact reduce the potential for abuse and misconduct in athletics as well as false allegations of abuse.

Common Criteria for Appropriate Physical Contact - Physical contact with minor athletes –for safety, consolation and celebration has multiple criteria that make it both safe and appropriate. These include:

- The physical contact takes place in public;
- There is no potential for (or actual) physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact;
- The physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult.

Safety - The safety of minor athletes is paramount, and in many instances the athletic activity is made safer through appropriate physical contact. Examples include:

- Spotting an athlete so that he or she will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment;
- Positioning an athlete's body so that he or she more quickly acquires an athletic skill, gets a better sense of where his or her body is in space, or improves balance and coordination;
- Making athletes aware that he or she may be in harm's way due to other practicing athletes, or equipment use;

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Celebration - Sports are physical by definition. The Indians recognize that participants often express a joy of participation, competition, achievement and victory through physical acts. USYS encourages these public expressions of celebration, which include:

- Greeting gestures such as high fives, fist bumps, and brief hugs;
- Congratulatory gestures such as celebratory hugs, “jump arounds” and pats on the back for any form of athletic or personal accomplishment.

Consolation - It may be appropriate to console an emotionally distressed athlete (e.g., an athlete who has been injured or has just lost a competition). Appropriate consolation includes, publicly:

- Embracing a crying athlete in a public place or circumstance;
- Putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down (“side hugs”);
- Lifting a fallen athlete off the playing surface and “dusting them off” to encourage them to continue competition.

Prohibited forms of physical contact include, without limitation:

- Asking or having a minor athlete sit in the lap of a coach or volunteer;
- Lingering or repeated embrace of a minor athlete that goes beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact;
- Slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from a minor athlete;
- “Cuddling” or maintaining prolonged physical contact of a minor athlete during any aspect of training, travel or overnight stay;
- Playful, yet inappropriate contact that is not a part of regular training, (e.g., butt-pats, tickling or wrestling-type “horseplay”);
- Continued physical contact that makes a minor athlete obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed or not;
- Any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire by the minor athlete for decreased or no physical contact, where such decreased contact is feasible in a competitive training environment.

The above physical contact is prohibited between adult and minor athlete AND between minor athletes. Coaches and volunteers must model the behavior expected from minor athletes. The above forms of Prohibited Physical Contact will be immediately reported to a team official, a league official, or Board Member. Some forms of physical contact may constitute physical or sexual abuse that must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities. When appropriate, the Prohibited Physical Contact will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authority.

Electronic Communications and Social Media Policy

19. Adhere to the Indians Electronic Communications & Social Media Policy. All electronic communications between a coach and minor athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about program activities. As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the athlete’s family. At the request of a parent or guardian, any email, electronic text, social media or similar communication will copy or include the athlete’s parents or guardians.

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FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, BLOGS AND SIMILAR SITES Coaches or volunteers can communicate with minor athletes through sites like Facebook, but all communication needs to be in group form and public (no private communication). If a Facebook page is used, all coaches and parents must be included. Coaches may not have athletes join a personal social media page. All posts, messages, texts, or media of any kind shared among athletes or between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes.

TWITTER, INSTANT MESSAGING AND SIMILAR MEDIA All communication is to be public in nature. Coaches and minor athletes may “follow” each other. Coaches cannot “re-tweet” athlete message posts. Coaches and volunteers are not permitted to “direct message” minor athletes through Twitter (or similar media). Coaches and volunteers are not permitted to post inappropriate off-color content or comment on inappropriate off-color posts. If there is doubt, treat the content as inappropriate.

EMAIL AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate if the athlete is at least 14 years of age. All email content between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about program activities. Where possible, the minor athlete’s parent should be copied on e-mail communications. Email communication between coaches and minor athletes is allowed during the hours of 7am and 10pm.

TEXTING AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS Texting is allowed between coaches and a minor athlete if the athlete is at least 14 years of age. Where possible, texts between a coach and an athlete must be a group text – the text should include another athlete, volunteer, a parent, or another coach/assistant. All texts between a coach and an athlete must be professional and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. No texting is allowed between a coach and an athlete before 7am or after 10pm, unless there is a specific soccer activity that requires a text communication.

The use of Snapchat (and similar apps) with minor athletes is not permitted.

ELECTRONIC IMAGERY From time to time, digital photos, videos of practice or competition, and other publicly obtainable images of the minor athlete – individually or in groups – may be taken. These photos and/or videos may be used for athlete instruction (i.e. practice and game films), team videos, team websites, or offered to the athletes’ families. The use of photos/videos is permissible as long as the athlete or athletes are in public view and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the athlete and the program. Photo or video imagery must not be contrary to any rules or guidance outlined in this Code.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE The parent or guardian of a minor athlete may request orally or in writing that their athlete not be contacted by coaches through any electronic communication; that request must be honored. Additionally, a parent or guardian of a minor athlete may request orally or in writing that photographs or videography of their athlete not be posted on program or team websites, understanding that group photography or videography may render this impracticable; to the extent this request is practicable, it should be honored.

MISCONDUCT Social media and electronic communication can be used inappropriately. (e.g., emotional abuse, sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communication by coaches, volunteers, officials, administrators, parents or other athletes will not be tolerated.

Electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

1. Drugs or alcohol use;

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2. Sexually oriented conversation, sexually explicit language or sexual activity;
3. An adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems;
4. Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures.

Any communication concerning a minor athlete's personal life, social activities, relationships, family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

MISCONDUCT BY PARTICIPANTS

20. Not tolerate any misconduct toward children or between children. It is a violation of this Code if a coach, volunteer or participant knows of misconduct, but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the child. All forms of misconduct should be reported to a coach, team official, league official, or Board Member.

Types of Prohibited Misconduct:

BULLYING – Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at any Indians activity and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to the victim. The Indians is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all participants. If bullying does occur, incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who is aware of bullying behavior is expected to tell a coach, team official, league official, or Board Member

HARASSMENT - Harassment is the repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that 1. Are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance; 2. Offend or degrade; 3. Create a hostile environment; 4. Reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or mental or physical disability; or 5. Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

Examples of harassment prohibited include, without limitation:

Physical offenses. Behaviors that include 1. Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping a minor athlete or participant; 2. Throwing at or hitting a minor athlete with objects including sporting equipment.

Non-physical offenses. Behaviors that include 1. Making negative or disparaging comments about an athlete's disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits; 2. Displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols; and 3. Withholding or reducing playing time to an athlete based on his or her disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits.

HAZING - Hazing is defined as coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for 1. An athlete joining a group; 2. An athlete being socially accepted by a group's members; or 3. Any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law.

Hazing does not include group or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion.

Examples of hazing prohibited include, without limitation:

1. Requiring, forcing or otherwise requiring an athlete to consume alcohol or illegal drugs; 2. Tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining an athlete; 3. Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature; 4. Sleep deprivation, otherwise unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food; 5. Social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule; 6. Beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault; and 7. Excessive training requirements directed at a particular athlete or a group of athletes.

Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of an athlete's willingness to cooperate or participate.

Discipline Policy and Procedure

21. Abide by the Indians discipline policy and procedure. The Indians Board of Directors has the authority to discipline any player, parent/legal guardian, their guests, and/or coaches who have violated the Indians' Code of Conduct guidelines or whose conduct is considered detrimental to the best interest of Indians activities or children participants.

Discipline violations could include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Warning: The offending person is advised of the nature of the offense(s) and informed in writing that further violations will result in a more severe penalty, or
2. Probation: The offending person is given a written warning and enters a period of probation to be determined by the Board of Directors, or
3. Suspension: The offending person is suspended from participating in Indians activities for a specified length of time to be determined by the Board of Directors. If the offending person should cause a coach to receive a red card and thus be ineligible to coach one or more games, the offender should also be suspended for at least the same period of time.
4. Bar: The offending person is barred from future participation in Indians activities to the end of the season at a minimum. A violator can only be reinstated by the approval of the Board of Directors. In addition to the above disciplinary options, any person ejected from a game is ineligible to return to the field for the next scheduled game of their team and any person ejected from a game twice in one season is automatically suspended from participating in any Indians sponsored activities until such time as they are reinstated by the Board of Directors.
5. Reporting to authorities: The Indians will comply with all laws requiring a person to make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency if that person has cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect. The Indians does not investigate suspicions or allegations of physical or sexual abuse, or attempt to evaluate the credibility or validity of such allegations, as a condition of reporting suspicions or allegations to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

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Any person subject to disciplinary action will be informed in writing by the Board of Directors and may review their conduct and have the right to appear before the Board of Directors to explain their conduct before disciplinary action is imposed. The decision regarding disciplinary action will be communicated within seven (7) days of the review. No person subject to disciplinary action will be entitled to a refund of the registration fee, or any fee associated with their participation in Indians activities.