

# PWYBA MISSION AND COACH CONDUCT/ABUSE POLICY

## SECTION I ASSOCIATION MISSION

The Plymouth Wayzata Youth Baseball Association's Mission is to provide area youth with excellent baseball instruction and programs which provide a safe, wholesome environment where children in our community can learn the game of baseball and enjoy the baseball experience.

## SECTION II ASSOCIATION GOALS

1. Teaching baseball skills to children in the community;
2. Promoting a safe fun environment for the children;
3. Promoting respect for others and the game of baseball by developing sound character, self-esteem, confidence, friendships, trust, goal setting and accomplishment.

## SECTION III BACKGROUND OF ABUSE

Abuse (defined in Section V below) in the world of youth sports has received increased media attention recently. How often this occurs is unknown, but the impact on children and the sports organization can be devastating. Medical Professionals state that the effects may not surface for years.

## SECTION IV PREVENTION PROGRAM

1. The purpose of this program is to, first and foremost, reduce the risk for potential abuse of children, and secondarily, reduce the corresponding risk of liability to the Association. Both risks can be substantially reduced by creating an unsuitable environment for sexual predators and/or abusers.
2. The program will key in on the essentials of education, volunteer screening, policy development and implementation, and program administration.
3. The intent of this program is not to be all encompassing, but instead, to provide the framework of a basic workable program that is more likely to be implemented by a group of volunteers with limited resources and time.
4. The simple framework of this program will not address all contingencies that are likely to be encountered. Therefore, these materials should be available and consulted frequently.
5. This program is applicable in this Association of volunteers/citizens who perform the various functions entailed in the running of a league without pay including league officers and directors, committee personnel, coaches, managers, umpires, scorekeepers, concession workers, etc. Any reference contained herein to "volunteers" shall be equally applicable to coaches or other individuals hired by the association.
6. Sports abuse may take many forms and may be the result of actions of other players, and non-Association personnel during games or Association functions. Association volunteers should be alert and immediately report such actions to their league commissioners and/or local police where applicable.

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7. The program requires an application and consent/release form to be completed by all Association volunteers allowing the Association to conduct criminal background checks.

### SECTION V

#### DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES OF INTOLERABLE CONDUCT

1. Verbal Abuse- ridicule or put-downs. Ex. “You’re stupid”, “You’re an idiot”
2. Emotional Abuse – threats to perform unreasonable tasks or attacking statements made to break a child’s self-worth and/or development. Name calling, making fun of or putting a child down, unnecessary yelling and saying of hurtful things, such as “You’re an embarrassment” and “You aren’t worth the uniform you play in” are examples.
3. Physical abuse – any hurtful physical touching or excessive exercise used to punish. Behaviors and actions that aren’t part of the sport and hurt somebody’s body constitute physical abuse. Obvious examples are hitting; kicking; slapping; shaking; and throwing equipment at players. Behavior that is violent versus disciplinary; abusive training practices; encouragement of or ignoring physical altercations between teammates, encouraging behavior or actions that can cause injury; coaching improper technique or encouraging conduct/actions that violates safety rules and behavior that intentionally injures and athlete are additional examples of physical abuse.
4. Sexual Abuse – physical assault, sexual battery, or coercive or expletive physical sexual contact is strictly prohibited. No adult or child may physically contact or sexually touch another’s various body parts. Sexually explicit or offensive verbal communication, exposure to illicit print or video materials, or verbal sexual harassment is also abuse. Misuse of power, authority, purported love and affection, manipulation and tricks are methods by which sexual abusers attempt to coercively gain attention and should be reported. Physical contact that provides comfort, reassurance or support to a young child should not include sexual touching.
5. Philosophical Abuse – Inappropriate use of core philosophies, such as win-at-all-costs mentalities and tactics; unsportsmanlike behavior; and condoning inequities in participation opportunities.
6. Neglect – failure to meet basic needs; failure to conduct team practices; failure to encourage or work with each athlete; and failure to provide each athlete fair opportunity to participate.
7. Chemical Abuse – using or being under the influence of alcohol or any non-prescribed, mood-altering drug/chemical, including performance enhancing drugs is strictly prohibited.

### SECTION VI

#### ASSOCIATION POLICIES TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE/MOLESTATION

1. One-On-One Contact – Excepting a volunteer’s child, the Association does not condone activities involving only one adult and one child. A parent, another adult or another child should be present for a volunteer’s work with a child outside of regular practice and game

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hours. This policy is not violated if the volunteer has the express consent of the child's parent or guardian.

2. Sleepovers – The Association does not endorse or approve parties at parents' homes or overnight parties involving an adult volunteer and athletes. A volunteer does not violate this policy if an athlete's parent consents to overnight supervision or when the volunteer is a family member of the athlete.
3. Touch Policy-Touch is only allowed when it is respectful and appropriate contact.
4. Take Home/Pick-Up – The Association discourages transportation of an athlete by a volunteer in order to avoid one-on-one contact. Volunteers shall not provide transportation to an athlete without the consent of the child's parent or guardian.
5. Absolute Child Abuse Prohibition – All forms of conduct identified as abuse in Section V, above, are strictly prohibited. No volunteer shall be allowed to participate in Association activities if they have been convicted of assaulting a child, child molestation, indecency with a minor, and subject to Section IX.3.a. below, is deemed to have engaged in conduct described in Section V, above.

### SECTION VII

#### IDENTIFYING SIGNS OF ABUSE/MOLESTATION

1. Required Awareness. All volunteers shall display alertness for any sign of abuse, which shall be reported as set forth below in Section IX. Obvious signs of parental child abuse, such as physical indicators (Ex. bruises, welts, broken bones) as well as the less obvious, such as the abuses defined in Section V, above. Although not absolute, some signs of abuse may be identified as follows:
  - a. Sudden shifts in behavior or attitudes when outgoing child suddenly builds a protected, closed wall or a generally happy child becomes aggressive and angry or a trusting child becomes fearful. These signs may be an indication of abuse. In sports, this can show up as losing interest or wanting to drop out of sports or a sudden decline in ability or functions
  - b. Disclosure by child. Most children won't just come out and say they have been abused, but instead, may hint at it.
  - c. Observations, complaints, concerns, or allegations about league volunteers.
  - d. Attitudes/behaviors expressed on the part of an adult that may be associated with inappropriate or abusive behavior (racist, poor sense of athlete development, raging temper, extremely controlling, jealous, hypersensitive, poor sexual boundaries, bullying, intimidating manner, unrealistic or inappropriate training practices and risks, etc.)
  - e. Unexplained/unlikely explanation of injuries.

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- f. Extreme fear of a league volunteer.
- g. Extreme low self-esteem, self-worth.
- h. A child's attachment to a coach/staff to the point of isolation from others.
- i. A coach/staff with an interest beyond caring concerns, special interest in a child (time, gifts, attention, obsession, unrealistic expectations).
- j. A child's desire to drop out without a clear explanation, or without one that makes sense.
- k. A child that misses a lot of practices or games with suspicious explanations or excuses.

\*The preceding list of indicators should not be deemed all-inclusive because many of these could be indicators of problems other than sports abuse. However, if some of these signs appear, consider them to be a red flag. One difficulty is that some signs are ambiguous. Children may respond in different ways and some may show no sign at all.

### SECTION VIII

#### WHEN ALLEGATIONS OR SIGNS OF ABUSE/MOLESTATION EMERGE

1. Assess the Seriousness of the Situation by differentiating between the following:
  - a. Concern: When the person just needs to be heard and have some information clarified.
  - b. Complaint: When the person needs you to listen and may or may not want action taken or the issue pursued if they feel you have listened.
  - c. Allegation: clarify whether the allegation is:
    - i. appropriate, but unappreciated action/conduct;
    - ii. inappropriate action/conduct, but not illegal; or
    - iii. illegal act that needs to be reported to law enforcement.
  - d. Disclosure: When the person tells you that abuse occurred or based on their actions gives you reason to believe abuse has occurred, then take action as set forth in Section IX, below.
2. Be Accountable. When you have witnessed or have been made aware of an incident that may be abuse, listen to what the athlete is saying. Despite increased sensitivity to abuse, there is a tendency to not listen to or blame the victim instead of taking action to hold the person(s) committing abuse accountable.

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### SECTION IX

#### STEPS AND REQUIREMENTS IF ABUSE HAS OCCURRED OR IS SUSPECTED

1. Mandatory Reporting by a coach or volunteer: Coaches shall immediately Report an Incident, Allegation, Concern, Complaint or Disclosure to their grade level Commissioner who shall report to the House Director or Travel Director. The Directors shall then advise the President. The President will require a documented account from the reporting party. The President shall consult with the Association board committee and obtain recommendations for further action on any report.
2. Information Gathering by Association: The President shall determine one of three processes to gather information related to any report as follows:
  - a. Referral to Association board committee on coach's conduct for further investigation;
  - b. Retention of independent third party investigator; or
  - c. Report to law enforcement.
3. Suspension/Termination:
  - a. Suspension: Depending upon the seriousness of the conduct, a person found to have violated the policies set forth herein may be suspended for such periods of time that the board committee feels appropriate after providing the alleged offender the opportunity to be heard.
  - b. Termination. All volunteers who have been found guilty of a serious crime, including, but not limited to those identified in Section V, above, shall be immediately terminated. An application for reinstatement may be presented to the Association if such adjudication is later overturned or is otherwise deemed invalid. Volunteers also face termination after one suspension or if there is evidence of egregious conduct in violation of the policies set forth above.
4. Association Duty to Disclose: Any report of suspected criminal behavior shall be reported to the proper legal authorities by the Association board.

### SECTION X

#### SAFETY STANDARDS FOR COACHES

1. Concussion Training: All persons serving as coaches or wishing to serve as a coach for the Association shall obtain Concussion Training before they are allowed to provide instruction or serve as a coach for the Association's athletes in any manner. Coaches shall certify completion of the training as required under the "Concussion Training" link on the Association's website [www.pwyba.com](http://www.pwyba.com).
2. Safety Review with Team: Prior to the start of any season, coaches shall provide safety instruction to their team. Minimally, this shall include the following:

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- a. Dugout Protocol: Athletes shall not engage in the following conduct in the dugout: swinging bats, throwing balls or any horseplay.
  - b. Field/Warm-up Protocol: Whether at practice or during games, athletes shall not: take batting practice, participate in batting drills, make a plate appearance or swing a bat unless all athletes in the immediate vicinity or involved in the drill are wearing a helmet; athletes should be positioned in the same direction during all throwing drills and such drills should be conducted in a manner to insure that no athlete can be struck by a thrown ball.
3. Athlete Discipline: Coaches may appropriately discipline athletes, but physical contact as discipline is strictly prohibited and provides grounds for suspension or termination of the coach in accordance with Section IX.3., above.
- a. Less serious instances of misconduct (not poor performance) should be limited to benching for no more than one inning.
  - b. Repeated misconduct or serious instances of misconduct may be treated with a one (1) game suspension after consultation with the house league commissioner or Travel Director.
  - c. No athlete shall be permanently removed from a team by a coach. The coach may recommend such action to their league commissioner or the Travel Director whom shall report to the President. The final decision shall be deferred to the appropriate board committee for consideration.
4. Duty to Report Serious Injuries: Coaches shall report all serious injuries to athletes to their house league commissioner or the Travel Director whom shall then report to the President. Reports are required for injuries that require the child to seek medical treatment, hospitalization or an emergency room or urgent care visit. The reporting form is provided on the league website.

### SECTION XI

#### REGISTRATION AS COACH AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THIS POLICY

All coaches MUST register with the Association and at the time of registration MUST consent to a background check and certify that they have reviewed and will comply with the terms of this policy. Any person not meeting these requirements is strictly prohibited from coaching for the Association.