

Youth Football Safety Guidelines

Purpose

The safety of every player is our top priority. These guidelines are designed to prevent injuries, promote safe play, and ensure that every athlete enjoys a positive football experience.

1. General Safety Principles

- Player First, Game Second – No game or drill is more important than a child's health.
- Zero Tolerance for Unsafe Play – No dangerous hits, cheap shots, or unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Report Injuries Immediately – Players must tell a coach or trainer right away if they feel pain, dizziness, or discomfort.

2. Equipment Safety

- Helmet & Pads – Must be properly fitted by a coach or certified fitter. Straps should be secured before every play.
- Mouthguards – Required at all practices and games.
- Cleats – Check for proper fit and no exposed metal spikes.
- Uniform Check – Coaches will inspect equipment regularly for damage or wear.
- Personal Items – No jewelry, watches, or hard hair accessories allowed on the field.

3. Heat & Hydration

- Hydration Breaks – Scheduled every 15–20 minutes in warm weather.
- Water Bottles – Each player must bring their own labeled bottle; sharing is discouraged.
- Heat Illness Awareness – Players should know the signs of heat exhaustion: dizziness, nausea, excessive fatigue.
- Clothing – In extreme heat, coaches may modify practice to lighter gear.

4. Practice & Game Safety

- Warm-Up & Stretching – Required before all physical activity to prevent injury.
- Contact Limits – Coaches will follow league rules on full-contact drills to reduce risk of concussion.
- Proper Technique – Tackling, blocking, and other skills taught with emphasis on safety (e.g., “Heads Up” football).
- No Horseplay – Goofing off with equipment or tackling without instruction is not allowed.

5. Concussion Protocol

- When in Doubt, Sit Out – Any suspected head injury means immediate removal from play.
- Evaluation – Only a licensed healthcare provider can clear a player to return.
- Signs to Watch For: headache, confusion, dizziness, nausea, blurred vision, or unusual behavior.

6. Parent Responsibilities

- Ensure your child has a sports physical before the season starts.
- Make sure your child's equipment fits properly before every game.
- Support the "safety first" approach – never encourage playing through pain.
- Communicate any medical conditions or injuries to coaches right away.

7. Emergency Preparedness

- A first aid kit and AED (if available) will be on site for all practices and games.
- Coaches and staff will be trained in basic first aid and CPR.
- Emergency contact info must be up to date for all players.

8. Weather Policy

- Lightning – All activity stops immediately; shelter is taken indoors or in vehicles until 30 minutes after last strike.
- Severe Weather – Games/practices will be postponed or canceled for dangerous conditions.

Acknowledgement

By participating in this program, all players and parents agree to follow these guidelines to help keep our team safe, healthy, and ready to play.