

TOWN OF TYNGSBOROUGH
RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT

YOUTH SPORTS CODE OF CONDUCT, POLICIES, AND GUIDELINES

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Article 1: General

1.1 Purpose of the Youth Sports Code of Conduct, Policies, and Guidelines (the Code):

The Town recreational properties, facilities, and parks (Recreational Properties) are maintained to provide residents, especially children, with opportunities to participate in sports and other recreational activities in a clean, safe, supportive, and positive environment and to ensure that the Town's residents and children may enjoy their sports, learn about competition, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

1.2 Policy Statement:

The Town's sport system is managed and operated by volunteers who contribute in many ways to the success of sports programs in the Town; and the volunteers are entitled to work in a safe and positive environment.

Of critical importance is for the Town, through its Recreation and Parks Department (the Department), to do all things necessary to ensure that preventative measures are in place so that incidents of violent or inappropriate behavior do not occur on its Recreational Properties. Included in this commitment is an understanding that organizations and persons using the Recreational Properties must take primary responsibility for the behavior of all associated with them: players, officials, parents, spectators, and volunteers at sporting events.

1.3 Statement of Principle:

Participation by children in sports is an important element in the human development process. To ensure maximum enjoyment and benefit from participation in sports, a safe and positive environment is essential.

The rules of each sport exist to protect the players. Referees and officials are charged with ensuring the fair and even application of the rules and the safety of the players.

The Code is promulgated to ensure the safety of referees and officials, as well as organizers of sports, who are for the most part volunteers. Volunteers are charged with the education of our youth on the ideals of sportsmanship, fair play and appropriate behavior.

The Code also applies to the conduct of Town participants in Department activities outside the Town.

1.4 Goal of the Code:

The goal of the Code is to reduce and/or prevent the occurrence of violent behavior within the Recreational Properties, to promote positive cheering behaviors among spectators, and to increase the level of understanding among spectators of the importance of creating a positive and supportive environment for youth sports.

1.5 Definitions:

Coach: A person who teaches and trains the members of a sports team and makes decisions about how the team plays during games

Committee: The Tyngsborough Recreation and Parks Committee.

Committee Chairperson: An appointed member of the Recreation Committee as the presiding officer of a meeting, organization, committee, or event.

Committee Vice-Chairperson: An appointed member of the Recreation Committee as the presiding officer of a meeting, organization, committee, or event in the absence of the Chairperson.

Department: The Tyngsborough Recreation and Parks Department.

Head Coach: A person who teaches and trains the members of a sports team and makes decisions as to how the team plays during games and is primarily in charge and makes decisions for the team.

League Director: A member of the Recreation Committee who manages an organized group of people to develop a program or sport.

Recreation Director: A Town employee appointment by the Board of Selectmen to administer the Department.

Recreational Properties: Any Department facility, property, or park where recreational events take place.

Technical Foul: Improper behavior or language rather than physical contact with an opponent. A foul that is assessed to a player, coach, or team typically for unsportsmanlike conduct (such as arguing with an official or taunting an opponent) and does not usually involve physical contact with an opponent while the ball is in play

Town: The Town of Tyngsborough.

Vandalism: The willful or malicious destruction or defacement of public or private property.

Violence: Includes, but is not limited to, verbal assaults, threats and attempts to intimidate, throwing articles in a deliberate or aggressive manner, aggressive approaches to another individual, attempted or physical striking of another individual, attempts to goad or incite violence in others, vandalism to facilities properties, racial and ethnic slurs, or use of profanity.

Volunteer: A person who participates by free choice without compensation.

Article 2: Zero Tolerance Policy:

The Committee and the Department shall not tolerate any of the following behaviors by any person using the Recreational Properties or participating in any Department activities:

- 2.1 Any form of physical violence, including but not limited to, assault, striking of another individual while engaged, enrolled or participating in a recreational activity, program, game, or sanctioned program. Violation of this paragraph shall warrant an automatic minimum one-year suspension from the date of the incident.
- 2.2 The consumption or use of alcohol or drugs, or the use of tobacco products, which consumption and/or use may result in a minimum one-year suspension from entering Recreational Properties from the date of the incident.
- 2.3 The verbal abuse of participants, coaches, referees, members of the public, which is deemed to be aggressive, intimidating, or having the objective of inciting violence, or the use of profane language or indecent gestures. Such behavior shall result in a written warning. A second warning shall result in an automatic four-game or one-week suspension with the ability to revoke permits for issued fields within Recreational Properties and suspension of the violator for up to one year.
- 2.4 Refusal to exit a Recreational Property, which refusal shall cause the removal of the person(s) assisted by law enforcement; and such person(s) shall not be allowed to return to the Recreational Facility for a minimum of four weeks to a maximum of one year.
- 2.5 An act of vandalism to any Recreational Property shall result in a minimum suspension from entering any Recreational Property of two months. The person(s) committing an act of vandalism shall be charged with the cost of repairing the damage.
- 2.6 The Department may close a program or Recreational Property because of prohibited behavior.
- 2.7 All incidences of prohibited behavior shall be reported to the Recreation Director and the Committee by coaches, referees, umpires, and other officials.
- 2.8 A person suspended from a program or Recreational Property may appeal his or her suspension to the Committee. The decision of the Committee shall be final. Removal from a program or Recreational Property will not be grounds for a refund of any fees paid to participate in such program.
- 2.9 The Committee reserves the right to amend this Zero Tolerance Policy at any time and to rule on unacceptable and prohibited behavior not specifically covered in this Zero Tolerance Policy.

Article 3: Consequences of Improper Behavior on Recreational Properties:

- 3.1 Individuals who engage in any of the above-listed behavior shall be subject to immediate ejection by the Recreation Director from the Recreational Property and will be mandatorily

suspended from Recreational Properties by the Recreation Director for a period of time not less than two months. Two months is a minimum period only and may be extended by the Committee.

- 3.2 Those individuals who are identified and suspended in accordance with this Policy shall further be prohibited from holding any positions within the Town-affiliated sport community for a period of two years.
- 3.3 Criminal acts shall be reported to the Town's Police Department by the Recreation Director.
- 3.4 Where new information is available, a suspended individual may request a reconsideration of the facts on which the suspension is based. Such request shall be addressed to the Recreation Director, who will confer with the Committee regarding the new information and make a decision.
- 3.5 Where an act of vandalism has been committed, not only will the responsible individual(s) be subject to suspension for a minimum of two months from entering any Recreational Property, but such individual(s) shall be required to reimburse the Town for the cost of damages.
- 3.6 The Department may close a program or Recreational Property because of prohibited behavior.
- 3.7 A person suspended from a program or Recreational Property may appeal that suspension to the Committee. The decision of the Committee shall be final. Removal or suspension from a program will not be grounds for a refund of any fees paid to participate in such program.

Article 4: Head Coach Code of Conduct, Policies, and Guidelines:

- 4.1 The head coach of a youth team is a volunteer and is the established leader for that group of players and plays a critical role in teaching important developmental lessons beyond the mechanics of the sport. The head coach's behavior, both active and passive, is a model for the players and contributes strongly to the pattern of behaviors adopted by the players. Trust and respect between coach, player, and parents are keys to a successful team.
- 4.2 The head coach, entrusted with a team by the Committee, shall commit to the following:
 - 4.2.1 Attend an official pre-season coach's meeting to understand his or her role.
 - 4.2.2 Schedule and execute a pre-season mandatory parent/player meeting to, at a minimum, distribute, explain, and collect all Department Sports Packets (to include: Zero Tolerance Policy, Head Coach Code of Conduct, Player Code of Conduct, Parent Code of Conduct, and Technical Foul and Game Ejection Policy,). No additional disciplinary paperwork or agreements shall be distributed without the approval from the Committee.
 - 4.2.3 Follow the Zero Tolerance Policy.

- 4.2.4 Place the wellbeing of all players, including their health and safety, ahead of his or her own competitive zeal.
- 4.2.5 Follow Tyngsborough Recreation Youth Sports age or grade-specific guidelines for minimum playing time as listed below. (Note: coaches are strongly encouraged to exceed these minimum requirements.)
- 4.2.6 Actively teach all the players the proper discipline and behavior related to their sport and not judge, favor, or scold players based on any personal agenda.
- 4.2.7 Work to continuously improve the coach's understanding of the game and his or her ability to communicate this knowledge to the entire team.
- 4.2.8 Communicate the coach's reasons to the player and to his or her parent or guardian when a player must be singled out for discipline.
- 4.2.9 Teach and set an example of competition marked by sportsmanship by: not berating the officials or others or talking trash; not abusing social media to directly or indirectly demean or embarrass any team, group, organization, or individual; not using profanity; demonstrating positive support for all players, including players on other teams, at every game; not permitting race, gender, national origin, or creed be a basis of decision-making or behavior; and promoting an alcohol-free, drug-free, and tobacco-free sports environment.
- 4.2.10 Acknowledge that there will be games when there is a clearly superior team; and the winning coach is expected to display fairness by not running up the score.
- 4.2.11 If the team is winning excessively, make certain that he or she encourages players to pass the ball or work on each their weaknesses instead of trying to score more points or runs.
- 4.2.12 Acknowledge that there is no need for any team to win by more than twenty-five points (basketball); fifteen runs (softball) or in accordance with league rules.
- 4.2.13 Pull back to avoid frustration for the losing players and coaches if the team is leading excessively.
- 4.2.14 Understand that a violation of these behavioral expectations by the head coach or his or her assistant(s) may lead to losing his or her position as a Tyngsborough Recreation Youth Coach at any time.
- 4.2.15 Acknowledge that all negatively submitted concerns regarding the head coach's conduct will be cause for a personal review by the Committee, which has the right to make a final decision to dismiss anyone from coaching in any and all Department sports and related activities.

- 4.2.16 Accept the responsibilities of a head coaching position and protect the reputation and ethics of Tyngsborough Recreation Youth Sports by promptly reporting any observed violations of the Code, particularly the Zero Tolerance Policy, to the League Director and Recreation Director.
- 4.2.17 Consider all these expectations in the selection of any assistants and staff.
- 4.2.18 By signing the Head Coach Agreement, the head coach acknowledges that he or she declares that he or she agrees to these expectations and consequences.

The attached Appendix A, Head Coach Agreement for Travel and Recreational Teams, is to be signed by the head coach.

Article 5: Code of Conduct, Policies, and Guidelines for Players:

- 5.1 Each player is expected to support his or her team and make a commitment to teammates, games, and practices.
- 5.2 Players, in coordination with parents or guardians, are responsible for timely notification of absences. Unexcused missed games or practices could result in a loss of playing time.
- 5.3. Players are expected to display good sportsmanship and to accept decisions made by coaches, referees, umpires, and other officials. Players are expected to provide positive encouragement and support to teammates under all circumstances.
- 5.4 Players are expected to follow their League rules and the Code which includes the Zero Tolerance Policy. Failure to follow the Code or the displaying of inappropriate attitude or behavior may result in loss of playing time and/or the removal from the team.

The attached Appendix B, Player Agreement, is to be signed by the Player and his or her parent or guardian.

Article 6: Code of Conduct, Policies, and Guidelines for Parents or Guardians:

- 6.1 Parents or guardians are expected to support their child in making a commitment to his or her team, games and practices.
- 6.2 Communication is key to any successful organization. Notify your child's coach if he or she is unable to attend a practice or game due to sickness, family emergency, or any other unforeseen circumstances as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in your child's losing future playing time.
- 6.3 Parents or guardians are expected to contact their child's coach for any concerns regarding their child. For issues beyond the coach's level of expertise or authority, parents or guardians are asked to submit a "Note of Concern" through www.Tyngsboroughrec.com or directly to the League Director or the Recreation Director, which Note of Concern will be promptly responded

to within seven business days. Parents or guardians are requested to not engage in any such conversations during a game or practice. Parents or guardians should allow a twenty-four hour cooling-off period before expressing such concerns.

- 6.4 Parents or guardians are expected to show good sportsmanship and to accept decisions made by coaches, referees, umpires, and other officials. Parents and guardians are expected to follow the sport's individual League rules and the Zero Tolerance Policy as outlined in the above Article 2. Parents or guardians are expected to provide positive encouragement to the team during games and to help set an example of good sportsmanship for players. If a parent or guardian is found harassing players, coaches, or officials, such parent or guardian may be asked to leave the Recreational Property.
- 6.6 If a parent or guardian or guest of a player receives a technical foul and/or is ejected from a game and/or the Recreational Property, the player associated with the violator may also be removed from playing the remainder of the game at the discretion of the head coach or official.

The attached Appendix C, Parent and/or Guardian Agreement, is to be signed by a parent or guardian.

Article 7 Technical Foul and Game Ejection Policy:

- 7.1 Players who are assessed technical fouls or are ejected from the game during the season shall be subject to the following penalties:

- 7.1.1 Player Technical Fouls:

- 1st Technical Foul: Verbal warning and probation for the season.
- 2nd Technical Foul: Suspension for two games.
- 3rd Technical Foul: Suspension for season and possible future seasons.

(Travel league will follow league rules or section 7.1.1 in the absence of rules.)

- 7.1.2 Player Game Ejections:

- 1st Game Ejection: Suspension for two games.
- 2nd Game Ejection: Suspension for the season and possible future seasons.

(Travel league will follow league rules or section 7.1.2 in the absence of rules.)

- 7.2 Coaches who are assessed technical fouls or are ejected from the game during the season shall be subject to the following penalties:

- 7.2.1 Coach Technical Fouls:

- 1st Technical Foul: Verbal warning and probation for the season.
- 2nd Technical Foul: Suspension for three games.

3rd Technical Foul: Suspension for the season and possible future seasons.

(Travel league will follow league rules or section 7.2.1 in the absence of rules.)

7.2.2 Coach Game Ejections:

1st Game Ejection: Suspension for three games.

2nd Game Ejection: Suspension for the season and possible future seasons.

(Travel league will follow league rules or section 7.2.2 in the absence of rules.)

7.3 All technical fouls and game ejections shall be reported by the head coach to the League Director and the Recreation Director, in writing, within twenty-four hours of the conclusion of the game. Failure to do so will result in the suspension of the coach.

Article 8: All Recreational Softball Leagues (as identified during registration):

8.1 Playing time is to be distributed equally, or reasonably equally, between team members suited-up and scheduled for play.

8.2 Travel Softball (all divisions/grades as identified during registration).

8.3 Minimum three innings on the field. Includes regulation and tournament games.

8.4 Travel team exceptions: Playoff or championship games, extra innings; unexcused absence at practice; behavioral and/or health and safety concerns.

Article 9 Travel Basketball Leagues (as identified during registration):

9.1 Playing time is to be distributed so that, at a minimum, all team members suited up and scheduled for play shall play an average playing time over the course of the regular season (not playoffs or championship) and only in regulations games, as follows:

Grades 4-5: 6 minutes average per game;

Grades 6-8: 4 minutes average per game;

except as below.

9.2 Travel Team exceptions: Playoff or championship games; overtime; unexcused absence at practice; behavioral and/or health and safety concerns.

Adopted: _____, 2017

