



PONDER PALS

**BYLAWS & RULES
PONDER, TEXAS USA**

LAST REVISION: 3/01/2024

ARTICLE 1

NAME

This organization shall be known as the Ponder PALS, Inc. The correspondence address will be Ponder PALS, P.O. Box 263, Ponder, Texas, 76259. Ponder PALS is not affiliated with the Ponder ISD or the Town of Ponder, TX.

ARTICLE 2

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE

The purpose of PALS is to serve the children of our community, aged 18 and younger, by offering various organized sports leagues, which provides an important opportunity for each child to participate in youth sports that encompasses installing the sense of teamwork, the excitement of victory and the character building exercise of facing defeat with dignity. The objective of PALS shall be to implant firmly in the children of the community the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage, and respect for authority, so that they may grow to be good, decent, healthy and trustworthy citizens. To achieve this objective PALS will provide supervised programs under the rules and regulations of various franchised leagues which we may partner with or obtain membership in. PALS, although competitively structured, will not put more emphasis on winning than on sportsmanship and player/team development, nor will we partner with or obtain membership in any organization that does.

ARTICLE 3

STRUCTURE

SECTION 1 – ORGANIZATION

PALS shall be structured according to these bylaws & rules in a manner to administer programs of athletic competition to include but not be limited to; baseball, basketball, cheerleading, football, soccer, softball, and volleyball. The individual league structures shall be governed by these bylaws & rules and/or the rules set forth by the individual leagues that PALS shall hold a partnership with.

SECTION 2 – EXECUTIVE & GENERAL BOARD

The PALS Board shall consist of the following elected members:

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Program Director
- Baseball Commissioner
- Basketball Commissioner
- Cheerleading Commissioner
- Football Commissioner
- Soccer Commissioner
- Softball Commissioner
- Volleyball Commissioner

SECTION 3 – EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board shall consist of the following positions:

President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Program Director

No Executive Board member shall be related by blood, marriage, adoption or be in a relationship to any other Executive Board member. Each executive board member position will be issued a PALS chromebook to be used for PALS business needs that must be returned at the term of position.

SECTION 4 – GENERAL BOARD

All matters of policy, business, or any other transactions, concerning PALS shall be decided by the vote of the board. Any vacancy during the term of office will be filled by nomination from the active members of the board. If vacancy cannot be filled, a current and active board member shall be delegated to that position by the President and Vice President.

Any board member can be removed from office by the two-thirds vote of the remaining active board members. Any member that resigns or is removed from the board by PALS vote (disciplinary action) shall not be allowed to serve on the board again. Each Board position will have one vote on any subject. In the event of a tie vote, the president will break the tie.

Any Board member may give their electronic vote to the President to vote in their absence, or they will not get to vote.

The General Board is charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Any and all matters of policy.
2. Any and all monetary transactions and enforcement of general accounting practices. Including receipt tracking and submission for expenses.
3. Any and all business transactions and/or matters related to the day to day operation of PALS which may come up during the normal course of business.
4. Board members are charged with administering any discipline necessary to any Board member, coaches, players, or parent(s) guilty of misconduct. Including tracking disciplinary actions taken.
5. Investigating any written complaint against and/or situation that resulted in the ejection of a coach, player or parent. This investigation is to be completed and documented within 1 week from the date of the incident reported.
6. For the conduct of the coaches, players, parents and fans at games played under PALS jurisdiction. The ideals of good sportsmanship must be instilled to the fans so that the ideals of good sportsmanship on the part of the players are not jeopardized.
7. The board by an affirmative 51% majority vote may suspend or remove any coach, player, parent, fan, and/or a specific team. Any of the previously named may be suspended for a specific period of time or indefinitely.
8. The General Board may delegate any responsibilities as they see fit and necessary unless prohibited elsewhere in these bylaws & rules.

SECTION 5 – ELECTIONS

Any board position is open to any person in the Ponder community interested in seeking that office, who is willing to uphold PALS policies and rules and who is willing to subscribe to its bylaws and put the needs of the youth in our community before personal gains. PALS cannot be used as a platform to promote board member businesses. All notices of “PALS Intent to Seek Office” shall be turned in NO LATER than April 30th of each calendar year. Elections will be announced at the PALS May monthly meeting to be held on or just prior to May 15th of each year. Terms of office for elected board members shall run from July 1st of the present year through June 30th of the end of term year. Each position has a brief overlap from May 15 until June 30, during which time all information must be shared regarding position, equipment, logins and passwords.

The President, Secretary, Baseball Commissioner, Football Commissioner, Volleyball Commissioner and Concessions Coordinator will be elected for 2 year terms on odd years. During even years the offices of Vice President, Treasurer, Basketball Commissioner, Cheer Commissioner, Soccer Commissioner, Softball Commissioner and Program Director will be elected for 2 year terms.

ARTICLE 4 DUTIES OF BOARD MEMBERS SECTION 1 – PRESIDENT

The President shall be the chairman of the Board. The President shall preside at all PALS meetings. The President may vote only to affect the results of the vote in cases of a tie. The President shall be responsible for seeing that these bylaws & rules are carried out and enforced. The President is responsible for the day to day operation of PALS and as PALS representative to the Ponder ISD and City of Ponder. The President shall be responsible for notifying Board members of all regular and special meetings. In the event of the death, permanent incapacity (unable to perform the major duties of the office for a continuous period exceeding three months), or resignation of the President, the Executive Board shall appoint an individual to serve as President for the remaining term of office.

SECTION 2 – VICE PRESIDENT

In the absence of the President, the Vice President will chair the meeting. The Vice President will obtain and maintain insurance policies for all sports and file insurance claims (Insurance policies MUST be in place prior to organized league activities). The Vice President is responsible for background checks and obtaining a photographer and organizing “picture day” for all sports. The Vice President shall temporarily assume the duties of the office of

the President if the President is absent or temporarily incapacitated. The Vice President will act as liaison with the Ponder ISD, partner leagues and city of Ponder.

SECTION 3 – SECRETARY

The Secretary will prepare the agenda for the monthly PALS meeting. The Secretary shall record and maintain minutes of all meetings. The Secretary is responsible for maintaining the attendance log of every meeting and notating the reason for any absence. Every month meeting minutes must be emailed to each board member prior to the next meeting and saved to the shared drive. The Secretary shall keep a current copy of the by-laws; keep a record of all PALS activities, rosters of officers, coordinators, coaches and sponsors. They shall be responsible for storing copies of all participant birth certificates.

SECTION 4 – TREASURER

The Treasurer shall temporarily assume the duties of the office of President if the President and Vice President are both absent. The Treasurer shall serve as the financial officer of PALS and shall be responsible for presenting a written financial report at the monthly general meeting. The Treasurer shall also be responsible for preparing and presenting an annual financial report at the May monthly meeting. The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping all financial records and purchase orders/receipts for all uniforms, equipment, etc. The Treasurer shall be responsible for filing and recording all Federal, State and Sales Tax documents that pertain to PALS financial matters. The Treasurer shall be responsible for mail and all correspondence.

SECTION 5 – LEAGUE COMMISSIONERS

The Commissioners shall be responsible for the registration and eligibility of all players and teams within their league and shall appoint Committee members as deemed necessary to carry out this function, after approval of the Board. The Commissioners shall oversee complaints in regards to their league and may take immediate disciplinary action against coaches, assistant coaches, registered players, parents, team representatives and/or teams within their league. All action taken must be reported to the Board within 48 hours. The Commissioners disciplinary action may be appealed to the Board.

The commissioners shall also be tasked with the following:

- Form teams prior to season opening
- Shall have the responsibility for the day to day operation of their league. To include:
 1. That they or another Board member is present at ALL home games.
 2. Payment of all officials and non-volunteer workers.
 3. Concessions are stocked and manned prior to open and moneybox is secured after final game ends
 4. All facilities are clean, lights are off after use, secure gates and doors.
- Shall be responsible for the selection of all Head Coaches and presenting them to the Board for approval. **PRIOR** to the start of any organized team activities. Shall also be responsible for approving all assistant coaches and parent concession volunteers.
- Shall conduct a coaches meeting with **ALL** coaches **PRIOR** to any organized team activities to go over league rules, coaches code of conduct, scheduling, etc.
- Shall select and present a uniform to the Board for approval **PRIOR** to sign ups. Must be in Ponder colors of red, white and gray.
- Shall be responsible for keeping a current up to date copy of **ALL** their respective team rosters along with birth certificates and game schedules.
- Distribute and collect all equipment at the beginning and end of the league season. Update log after season end.
- Shall attend random practices to evaluate coaching techniques.
- Shall coordinate all information for the tournament(s) to head coaches.
- Shall be responsible for attending all league, district and any state meetings and reporting all new information from these meetings to the Board.
- Shall be responsible for running the concession stand at Ponder facilities which includes purchasing food, finding workers, set-up and clean-up.
- Shall clean all concessions at season end and sell any usable leftover food to the next sport
- Clean equipment at end of season and ensure it is all properly organized in storage ready to be used the next season
- Shall be responsible for any other tasks that may be assigned to them by the Board.

SECTION 8 – PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Program Director shall be responsible for the design and upkeep of the PALS website and Facebook. The Program director creates and organizes registrations, birth certificates, and yearly equipment inventory records. A neutral Program Director will also act as Administrator for managing the google drive, google email and monitoring of Amazon business accounts. The Program Director will be in charge of receiving complaint survey responses and notifying the correct channels. The Program Director shall also be responsible for the posting of all information about signups, game schedules, meetings and any other information pertaining to PALS to the website and social media. The Program Director will be in charge of updating social media and for setting up digital voting for any and all elected positions.

ARTICLE 5 MEETINGS

A formal and legal meeting of the PALS board shall be a meeting called by the PALS President, and attended by 7 or 51% of the active board members which constitutes the quorum needed for conducting the normal and/or business needs of the league. General meetings will occur on the second Wednesday of each month, at 6:30 pm, or as decided by the President. The following are guidelines for conducting PALS meetings.

Section 1 – GENERAL MEETING:

General meetings will be held once each month. Time and location to be set by the President or Vice President, and to be announced by email, group chat or a phone call. One week notice must be given prior to the meeting date to allow for the board to accommodate for attendance. The meeting will discuss PALS business and plan for upcoming events.

Section 2 – ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING:

This type of meeting will be held annually on or just prior to May 15th each year. The purpose of this meeting is to elect new members to the PALS Board, departing members will hand over important information, give the yearly PALS status/financial report, and to plan for the upcoming year.

Section 3 – EMERGENCY MEETING:

This type of meeting will be held at the Executive Board discretion. Emergency meeting sessions may be called by the Executive Board with at least 72 hour notice. This notification will be handled by the President.

Section 4 – SPECIAL ACTION:

For situations requiring board action that occurs where there is not time to hold an emergency meeting, The President may call for a vote via email and/or text on an issue. In this instance, a majority of the PALS Board must vote affirmatively for the action to be declared passed. All voting can be cast via the designated group communication app (Groupme) or by email sent to the Secretary by the voting deadline.

Section 5 – EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS:

An Executive Board meeting consisting of the Executive Board members may be called at any time the board deems necessary to discuss any PALS related business or financial matters.

Section 6 – GENERAL MEETING RULES:

All meetings are to be conducted by the President, or in case of the President's absence, the Vice President.

Each meeting will follow the following format:

Open to General Membership/Public

1. Roll Call
2. Recap of previous month discussions
3. Old Business
4. New Business/Open Forum

Closed to General Membership/Public

1. Report of Commissioners
2. Report of Executive Committee
3. Report of Committees
4. Adjournment

The Secretary will log attendance and record the minutes at every meeting. Those minutes are to be reviewed at the following meeting. The Treasurer will have a financial report available at every general meeting for the Executive Board and sport balance report available for each commissioner. Treasurer will need to be notified in advance if a report is needed for emergency meetings. The next meeting date will be announced at the end of the meeting.

ARTICLE 6 ATTENDANCE

Any board member that misses **2** consecutive meetings or **5** meetings in any one year period, without notification or approved absence, may automatically lose their position on the board or have their status changed from active to inactive. To be considered in attendance you must be present for the whole meeting. Meeting attendance is mandatory for the Commissioner during their sports season to relay important information. During inactive status the board member will not receive board member discounts. Their status cannot be reinstated to active until a vote by a majority (2/3) of the Board occurs at the next regularly scheduled general business meeting. The absences and meeting attendance will be tracked by the Secretary and the President. In addition, a log sheet will be sent each month with the meeting minutes. All board members are required to attend ALL mandatory meetings/events called by the President. If a member is unable to attend, they must submit to the Secretary or by group communication the reason for the absence and it will be voted on by the board as to whether the absence is excused or not. All board members are expected to participate in every sport and volunteer as needed. Every commissioner is expected to attend home games for their sport. If they are unavailable they must make arrangements for another board member to fill in. Every home game must have a board member present at all times.

ARTICLE 7 GENERAL ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES SECTION 1 – GENERAL PROCEDURES

The board shall decide all matters pertaining to the finances of PALS. It shall be general policy to place all monies in a common treasure as follows:

- There will be 1 checking bank account maintained by the PALS treasurer with which PALS will conduct business. However, each sport will be tracked separately.
- All donations will be used as requested by the donor.
- Other bank accounts of various types may be opened and closed as the Board sees necessary to conduct the business of PALS.
- All checks over \$5000.00 require two signatures.
- Monthly Financial reports will be compiled showing income and expense for each sport and activity along with a running year to date total.
- All financial records will be available for review via Quickbooks at any time by any board member. The Treasurer shall prepare a final report for review before relinquishing position.
- All PALS financial taxes shall be prepared by a 3rd party CPA.
- Parents should be notified that a \$35 fee will be charged on all Returned Checks.

SECTION 2 – INCOME

1. ALL Cash drawers must be counted, verified, and signed off on by two Board members.
2. Receipts MUST be offered for all donations.

SECTION 3 – EXPENSES

1. Only authorized expenses will be paid with receipt/invoice.
 - unauthorized purchases are subject to not be paid or reimbursed by PALS
 - all receipts/invoices must be submitted to the treasurer within 14 days of receipt.
- a. Board members can spend up to \$100 without authorization monthly.
- b. The President can approve up to \$500 without authorization.

- c. The Executive Board can approve items up to \$1000.
- d. Any expense over \$1000 will require majority (2/3) approval of the entire board.
- 2. Signup fees for all sports will be determined each season based on cost history from past seasons and new fees determined by the board.
- 3. Board member registration discounts are as follows:
 - a. Board members may reduce their registration fees by ½ for their immediate children (exceptions: cheerleading - \$50 deduction and soccer - no deduction).

SECTION 4 SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships will be given and approved by the board to any individual that cannot afford the registration fees to insure that all youth have the opportunity to participate in its programs. Rules for scholarship are as follows:

- 1. Unrestricted Scholarships regarding sport registration (Paid for through volunteer service)
 - a. Application must be filled out and approved.
 - b. All scholarship recipients (parent) will have to volunteer 15 hours per scholarship. This work will be done at the concession stands, gates, or wherever help is needed.
 - c. Scholarship recipients will have the understanding that if they either refuse or fail to complete their volunteer requirement, they will forfeit their right to future scholarships, and ALL monies extended to them will become due and payable before registration will be allowed for a future sport.
 - d. All scholarships will be kept private.
- 2. Restricted Scholarships (Money donated by individuals, companies, and/or other foundations).
 - a. Must meet the requirements set forth with the donation, if any.
- 3. School College Scholarships are decided at the May meeting.
 - a. scholarship requirements are determined at the beginning of the school year
 - b. applications are due by April 15th unless extended by the Ponder ISD
 - c. all valid candidates are voted on by the board

ARTICLE 8 COACHES AND VOLUNTEERS

All head coaches must be 18 years of age or older and be approved by board recommendation. Coaches will be responsible for the conduct of themselves, their assistants, and their players and their fans at all times. Background checks will be run on all coaches and volunteers at no cost to themselves prior to board approval. The background check will cover the coach for the entire year (12 month period). PALS reserve the right to run additional background checks within the year period at no cost to the coach. Once a coach has been approved by the Board, he must read and sign a coaches' Code of Ethics/Conduct agreement (Attachment 1) prior to being allowed to hold practices or games. This will include an agreement to follow the guidelines and rules set forth by PALS and other affiliated organizations.

Head coaches and assistant coaches must actively coach their team. Failure to comply will result in the commissioner replacing said coaches. It is at the Commissioner's discretion on head coach selection. It is not guaranteed that returning coaches will be asked to coach again if complaints were received during the season. Coaches will dress in appropriate ball attire applicable to the game. No alcohol or tobacco, in any form, will be allowed on the playing field, either at practice or at a regular scheduled game, or at any PALS function. No abusive language or actions (Gestures) toward any player, parent, officials connected with a game, board member or officials connected with practice will be allowed. Problems with any person(s) will be turned over to the commissioner of the respective league and/or the Board for corrective action.

It is also noted that if the conduct of a coach be such as may be considered unbecoming a lady or gentleman, on or off the field of play, he or she may be suspended or removed by a majority of the board of directors from further participation in league activities for the current or succeeding year(s).

Any coach or team representative ejected from a PALS game by the referee or game official will be subject to the following suspensions:

- 1. 1st offense – 1 game suspension
- 2. 2nd offense – season suspension
- 3. 3rd offense – lifetime ban

Decisions on penalties for failure to comply with rules and standards will be issued by the Board. The penalties will be swift and fitting and could include the following:

- REMOVAL AND/OR BAN FROM THE COURT OR OTHER FACILITY

- REMOVAL FROM COACH'S POSITION
- BAN FROM THE LEAGUE
- ARREST

ARTICLE 9 PLAYER PARTICIPATION

Participation in PALs activities should be considered an extracurricular privilege. Participation is approved for any child – without prejudice. However, it is each player's responsibility to show up on time for all practices and games, to follow the rules of play, and to comply with the guidelines of conduct adopted by PALs. Failure of a player to conduct themselves in a proper manner can result in loss of playing privileges.

ARTICLE 10 REGISTRATION / PLACEMENT

Registration in a PALs sports league is open to all children aged 18 and younger. The only residency limitations on registrants are those imposed by rule or policy of an organization with which PALs has an association or affiliation. All registration fees will be set by the Board prior to the opening of signups. Registration fees are based on many cost factors (league fees, insurance, uniforms, umpires/referees, utilities, etc.). PALs will make every effort to keep these costs as low as possible. A volunteer opt-out fee can be instituted at the registration level for any sport that has determined that parental involvement has dropped to a level insufficient to operate concessions or facilities. This fee will be based on the number of hours needed during the season home games. A breakdown of the registration fee shall be made available to any member who requests it. All player registrations are due by the advertised deadline. Any registrations received after the registration deadline shall be assessed a late fee. Any late registrations received shall be accepted by league commissioner approval only. Late fees can be waived by appeal to the Board. All registered players shall be placed accordingly (Note: All home schooled players **SHALL** be placed by age **ONLY**):

- Baseball: by age
- Softball: by age
- Basketball: current grade level
- Football: current grade level
- Cheerleading: current grade level
- Soccer: by age
- Volleyball: by age

All players must play in their age group/grade level unless approved by the commissioner. Players wanting to play in a higher age group must notify the league commissioner before registering. No one will play in a group lower than their age. No child can play higher than one grade up.

Full refunds will be given up to the formation of teams with administration fees subtracted. After teams are created for the season only partial refunds will be returned. Partial refunds will be minus expenses (i.e., uniforms, insurance, league fees, etc.). **NO REFUNDS SHALL BE GIVEN** to any player who refuses to play for the team or who quits to join another team. Players who refuse, without justification, to play for the team or coach will also forfeit their right to participate that season.

ARTICLE 11 TEAM FORMATION GUIDELINES

Team formation will adhere to the rules, policies and guidelines of the governing league that PALS retains membership/affiliation with. If those guidelines are limited in their definitions, the following team formation processes will apply.

1. Parents/players may request to not play for a certain team/coach, but they must provide a written statement to the PALS Board outlining the reason(s). The decision of the PALS Board to either allow or deny the request will be final.
2. Where there are sufficient numbers to allow for multiple teams, a draft can be held for all players.
3. All returning players may return with their previous head coach when possible.
4. A player who is eligible to return to their preceding years team but does not want to, may **PRIOR** to team formation, declare in writing to the league commissioner of his intent to not return to his previous team and request a different coach.

5. A Head Coach may petition the PALs Board in writing to have a player removed from his roster by the close of regular season play to be effective the following season. The petition shall be accompanied by the appropriate documentation and specific information. The Board's decision shall be final.
6. Each head coach must have their own child play on the team they coach. The head coach's child and assistant coach's child will automatically be placed on the head coach's team; within age restraints.
7. Team formation will be completed by the league commissioner and monitored by two (2) board members. If there are not enough coaches for any age group, a Board Member will reach out to all parents. If no parents step up to coach the only options are to return registration or play the child up if there is room.
8. Late registration players(s) will be offered to the head coach with the fewest number of players.
9. Any coach/parent/guardian who has concerns with the team formation must present their grievance in writing to the commissioner for review and investigation within five (5) days following the draft. The commissioner shall have 72 hours to resolve the matter before the finalization of the teams. If the coach/parent/guardian is not happy with the commissioners' resolution, they have 48 hours to submit an appeal to the PALS Board.

ARTICLE 12 LEAGUE RULES

PALs will adhere to the rules, policies and guidelines of the governing league that PALS retains membership/affiliation with.

ARTICLE 13 GENERAL OPERATING PROCEDURES SECTION 1 – INSURANCE

Each player shall be covered by a group type accident insurance policy. The policy will be in the name of, and obtained by, PALS. Any other parties involved must also be listed on the policy. For example – Ponder ISD will be listed as an insured when using school facilities for league play. **THERE WILL BE NO PRACTICES UNTIL THE POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE.** Coaches will be notified when practices may start by the commissioner of their league. Claim forms will be provided upon request.

SECTION 2 – EQUIPMENT

All issued equipment will be approved for play by the designated league commissioner and PALS board. Equipment will be purchased upon request and/or approval of the board. Each coach will be responsible for the equipment issued to them. Equipment is to be returned upon requested date unless other arrangements have been made. Each league commissioner is charged with the responsibility of tracking, inventorying, and logging all PALS equipment. The commissioner will check the equipment in and out and keep track of unreturned or damaged equipment.

SECTION 3 – UNIFORMS

- Baseball: Each player will be issued a uniform jersey and a ball cap.
- Softball: Each player will be issued a uniform jersey and socks.
- Basketball: Each player issued a uniform jersey and shorts
- Cheerleading: Each player will be issued a full uniform including shoes, bag and pompoms.
- Football: Each player will be issued a uniform jersey, pants (w/ pads), shoulder pads, and helmet.
- Soccer: Each player issued a uniform jersey and shorts.
- Volleyball: Each player issued a uniform jersey.

Anything not listed above in this section shall be provided by the player at their own expense. All player provided items must be in safe usable condition and approved for the sport and by the league for which they will be used.

SECTION 4 SCHEDULES

Each sanctioned league will make its own schedules. League commissioners are responsible for ensuring that schedules are distributed to their coaches and Program Director for posting on the PALS website.

SECTION 5 WEATHER

In the event of lightning, thunder, rain, darkness, or any other situation, which would affect the continuance of a practice or field condition(s), the coach and/or Commissioner of that sport has the authority to stop the practice (unless it is a game and then the ump/ref has the final authority to stop/delay the event). The players should be removed to a safe place until the weather improves. After a 30 minute interval if the weather has improved and lightning has ceased, the coach and/or Commissioner should decide whether to continue or officially stop the practice (unless it is a game and then the ump/ref has the final authority to stop/delay the event). If lightning is within 8 miles at any time during a practice or game, play stops immediately. Once a Tornado warning has been received for Ponder, all practices and games must cease play and be canceled immediately for the safety of all players and parents.

SECTION 6 – COMPLAINTS

Individuals who wish to file a complaint regarding matters that involve the violation of these Bylaws & Rules, the rules and policies of each sports league, the PALS Coaches Code of Conduct, the Parents Code of Conduct, and/or matters against any head coach, assistant coach, umpire, referee, parent, PALS/sanctioned league worker or Board member must complete the PALS Incident Report and submit to a PALS President within seven (7) days of the incident. ALL PALS forms can be found at www.ponderpals.com The PALS President will investigate the complaint and report back to the Board. The Board will then take the appropriate action as it deems necessary.

ARTICLE 14 BACKGROUND SCREENING POLICY SECTION 1 – STATEMENT

Ponder PALS has implemented a mandatory background screening policy for all board members, managers, coaches, and volunteers. The background check is thorough, confidential, and all screenings will be paid for by PALS. Please note that if you provide false information or information that does not coincide with what is found in the investigation, you will fail the check and will need to pay all associated fees. This is particularly true of names, aliases/prior names and your address history.

Criminal background screening is conducted by an outside third party which specializes in such work, and overseen (in specific instances) by the PALS Executive Board. This is executed in an effort to protect the children who participate in all organized sports and related activities associated with PALS. PALS recognizes a coach is any person who leads and instructs players at practices and/or games or portions of practices and/or games for all PALS sanctioned sports and activities.

The criminal background screening is mandatory for all coaches and assistants who interact with PALS players, there are no exceptions.

SECTION 2 – PROCEDURE

All candidates for the above mentioned positions must sign a release which gives PALS the right to check criminal history records and verify social security numbers. This work is executed directly through a third party vendor, utilized via a secure URL, at which coaches can execute their PALS background check. The company never forwards any individual's information to the league where no issues are discovered. In the event information surfaces via the background check, the PALS Executive Board will review such background check information to determine coaching eligibility. Only members of the Executive Board will review data obtained, which will then be processed discreetly. All information is strictly confidential and will not be made public under any circumstances. Reasons for being declined the opportunity to coach, volunteer, and/or serve as a board member are noted below as part of this policy. In some instances, factors of time may be taken into account when considering eligibility (i.e. length of time since disposition of certain offenses). The decision of the Executive Board may be appealed to the full PALS Board, for the purpose of clarifying facts or explaining extenuating circumstances, to the screening committee. All board members, managers, coaches, and volunteers are required to notify PALS immediately following an arrest or conviction on any of the listed offenses. Any person, who, while serving in any capacity for PALS is arrested for committing an offense as listed, will immediately forfeit his/her eligibility until disposition by the courts. A conviction of an offense as listed will result in termination of eligibility as stated in the policy.

The following is a list of offenses prohibiting an applicant from participation as a coach under PALS offenses including but not limited to the following:

- Arson
- Assault (including aggravated and sexual)
- Aggravated Kidnapping
- Aggravated Robbery
- Crimes against Children (including abandonment, abuse, endangerment, pornography, possession or promotion of pornography, enticement, solicitation, sale or purchase of, injury to, or indecency)
- Criminally Negligent Homicide
- Deadly Conduct
- Delivery of Marijuana
- Manufacture of or Delivery of a controlled substance or dangerous drug
- Any violation of a law intended to control the possession or distribution of any controlled substance or illegal drug
- Indecent Exposure
- Injury to Elderly or Disabled
- Intoxication Manslaughter
- Kidnapping
- Manslaughter (voluntary or involuntary)
- Murder
- Prohibited Sexual Conduct
- Prostitution (including promotion of, aggravated promotion of)
- Public Lewdness
- Rape
- Sexual Abuse
- Marijuana Possession ¹
- Driving While Intoxicated/Impaired (DWI) / Driving Under the Influence (DUI)*
- Theft ²

¹ *If a first offense and not currently under probation eligible, but cannot drive any child other than his/her own. More than one violation has occurred or currently on probation ineligible.*

² *Eligibility depends upon the severity and length of time since offense occurred.*

ATTACHMENT 1
COACHES CODE OF ETHICS/CONDUCT

1. The term “Coach” shall include but is not limited to Head Coach, Assistant Coach(s) or any other person in a team leadership role.
2. The coach must never put the value of winning over the safety and welfare of players. Winning should be the result of preparation and discipline with emphasis placed on the highest ideals and character traits.
3. Coaches shall instruct players to play within the written laws of the game and within the spirit of the game at all times.
4. Coaches shall not seek unfair advantage by teaching deliberate unsportsmanlike behavior to players.
5. Coaches should not tolerate inappropriate behavior from players regardless of the situation.
6. Demands on players’ time should never be so extensive as to interfere with academic goals and progress. Motivation for excellence should include academics as well as athletics.
7. Under no circumstances should coaches authorize or encourage the use of medicinal or performance enhancing drugs. Players should be directed to seek proper medical attention for injuries and to follow the physician’s instructions regarding treatment and recovery. At no time should a player be put at risk by returning from injury prematurely or by being forced to play while injured.
8. Adherence to all league rules and policies, especially those regarding eligibility, team formation, recruiting and guest players are mandatory and should never be violated. It is the responsibility of every coach to know and understand these rules.
9. Player development and the growth of the player through participation are essential to the growth of the sport. Additionally, the coach must behave in such a manner that the principles, integrity, and dignity of the sport are maintained.
10. Officials must have the support of coaches, players and spectators. Criticism of officials undermines their purpose in the game. Coaches must always refrain from criticizing officials in the presence of players.
11. Comments regarding an official should be made in writing to the appropriate organization assigning the official.

Coach’s name printed _____

Date _____

Coach’s signature _____

**ATTACHMENT 2
PARENTAL CODE OF CONDUCT**

Ponder PALS has implemented the following Parent Code of Conduct for the important message it holds about the proper role of parents in supporting their child in sports. Parents are **REQUIRED** to read, understand, and sign this form **PRIOR** to their children participating in our league. Any parent guilty of improper conduct at any game or practice will be asked to leave the sports facility and be suspended from all further PALS events until they appear before the PALS Executive Board. Repeat violations may cause a multiple game suspension, or the season forfeiture of the privilege of attending all games.

The essential elements of character building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these "six pillars of characters".

I therefore agree:

- I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.
- I (and my guests) will **never** enter into the playing field/court of any practice or game unless I have been cleared by PALS background check and/or have been invited to do so by a coach or official.
- I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child 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.
- I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing, taunting, refusing to shake hands or using profane language or gestures.
- I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and wellbeing of the athletes.
- I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- I agree that I and my child will treat other players, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex, or ability.
- I will praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard, and make my child feel like a winner every time.

I will remember that all parents should be cheerleaders and to applaud all good plays by my child's team

AND by members of the opposing team as well.

- I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participants for making a mistake or losing a game.
- I will emphasize the importance of skill development and practices and how they benefit my child.
- I will promote the emotional and physical wellbeing of the athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child to win.
- I will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches at the game field, and will take the time to speak with coaches the next day or at the next practice.
- I will remember that the coaches are volunteering their personal time and money in order to provide a recreational activity for my child. The coach is offering an invaluable community service often without any reward other than personal satisfaction and without them my child would not be able to participate in Ponder Sports.

- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all sports events.
- I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices, unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.
- I understand and agree that my child's participation and presence at practice will determine their playing time. I also understand that the coach will have the final say as to the amount of playing time my child has on the court/field if my child does not participate or show up to practice within participating league requirements.

Acknowledgement and Agreement of Ponder PALS – Parent Code of Conduct

I acknowledge that I have read, understand, and have been given a copy of the PALS Parental Code of Conduct. I further agree and affirm by my signature below that by my attendance at any PALS event, I (and my guests) am representing the Town of Ponder and Ponder PALS and will conduct myself in accordance with this code of conduct. I also understand that Ponder PALS reserves the right to limit or remove participation of any person in any role for any violation of this code or action(s) that may disrupt, harm, or otherwise injure any other player, coach, official, parent, and/or guest of any PALS event.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____