



**Codes of Conduct for Players and, Parents** –Strongsville Mustangs Fastpitch Association is a duly organized non-profit organization in the State of Ohio and registered 501(c) 3 organization with the Internal Revenue Service. Strongsville Mustangs Fastpitch Association is not operated or directly affiliated with the City of Strongsville nor is it directly operated by a single league of play. Strongsville Mustangs Fastpitch Association’s mission is to provide youth girls an opportunity to develop superior life skills through team play, sportsmanship, top competition, and hard work. Our mission is for the betterment of young athletes to develop citizenship, leadership, and athletic values, provide instruction in the sport of fastpitch softball, and to enable teams to compete regionally. An emphasis on fair play and respect for all participants is a primary element of our association’s mission. Strongsville Mustangs Fastpitch Association will be referred to as the “Association”. To better achieve that mission, we provide the following Codes of Conduct for ***all*** players, parents, and coaches. These Codes of Conduct are a covenant between players, parents, and coaches to abide by the rules of the game, as well as to maintain a cooperative attitude and uphold the ideals of fair play and sportsmanship. These Codes express our core values and goals. It is essential they be honored and followed. The Codes of Conduct can be summarized in the following three principles:

1. Demonstrating a positive attitude.
2. Setting a good example.
3. Maintaining good relationships with all youth softball participants - including officials, opponents, and our own teams’ players, parents, and coaches.

**Demonstrating a positive attitude**- Players, parents, and coaches are expected to show a positive, respectful attitude for everyone involved in the sport. Criticism and disrespect for officials, opponents, coaches or fans undermine the purpose of sport and encourages behavior contrary to the spirit of the game and the mission of the Association.

**Setting a good example**- Each person associated with the association is accountable for his/her own behavior at all times on or off the field of play. Parents, coaches and other adults should remember that children learn by example - it is up to the adults to set good examples. The Association will not tolerate conduct that is detrimental to the sport, the participants, or the community. Such conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Harassment or belittling of officials, coaches or players; verbal abuse;
- Threats or physical violence toward anyone before, during or after a game.

- Taunting of opposing players, coaches and parents. We require thorough self-restraint by all participants - both players and adults. Teams must exercise appropriate control over those who fail to control themselves.

**Maintaining good relationships Officials** - The umpire's job is a difficult one. All umpires are human and they do make mistakes. Parents or players who believe their team has been treated unfairly or has been assigned an unqualified umpire should speak to their coach after the game. Coaches should inform the appropriate club officials about blatant officiating problems. Coaches should make reports through appropriate channels. Opponents - Players and coaches are required to maintain a sense of fair play and be respectful of opposing players, coaches and fans at all times.

**Sportsmanship**-Begins with respect. Without it, the positive competitive environment, which should be a perfect classroom for learning the values of softball, is completely undermined. Occasionally we will encounter opponents who do not share our values and high standards. If we allow ourselves to be drawn down to their level, we will have lost regardless of the final score. Our Own Team - In an environment where our children are competing not only against other teams but also frequently against each other, it can be difficult to control jealousies and rivalries. ***A successful team resembles a family in that members put their own needs second, behind the needs of the team in order to work toward the greater good. The idea of "team first, individual second" is all-important in the Association.***

**Player's Code** - It is a **privilege** to play on a travel softball team **not a right**. As an Association player, I will do the following

1. Play the game for the game's sake, and not just to please my parents or coach.
2. Be modest and generous when I win and gracious when I lose.
3. Respect the game of softball and its rules, learn these rules and try to follow them, and play the game fairly.
4. Always sprint on an off the field. The effect of hustle in a game is contagious and positively impacts your team and shows your opponent you will not give up.
5. Work for the good of my team and give my best effort at all times.
6. Show respect for the authority of the umpire, even though I will sometimes disagree with his/her calls.
7. I will not leave the dugout to speak to my parent or guardian unless specifically authorized by the coach for a justifiable reason.
8. Show good sportsmanship before, during, and after games. I understand that softball is a game, and that the players on the other team are my opponents, not my enemies.
9. Conduct myself with honor and dignity and treat other players as I would like to be treated.
10. Help my parents and fans understand the rules of the game so they can watch and enjoy the game better. I will be sure they understand that dissent is not permitted in travel softball leagues.
11. Control my temper and not retaliate, even if I believe I have been wronged.
12. Not use or possess tobacco, alcohol, or illegal or performance-enhancing drugs.

13. Understand I may play other positions and be on the bench at times. I will be supportive of the role I am assigned.
14. I will not engage in making disparaging comments about teammates, players, parents, coaches or the Association including verbally, written or through social media including but not limited to Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Intagram or text messages.

**Acknowledgement**- I have read, understand and hereby agree to abide by and support Association's Player's Code of Conduct. I understand that if I blatantly disregard this code of conduct I can be suspended from the team or removed from the team in its entirety

Player's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Player's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's Code**- As a parent, you play a special role in the development of your daughter, and of her teammates. Your encouragement and good example will do more to ensure good sportsmanship and self-discipline than any other influence. The other team is the opponent, not the enemy, and should be treated with respect. While winning is important, playing well and fairly is the essence of the game. As an Association parent I agree to do the following:

1. **Support your child** -Support your child by giving encouragement and showing interest in his/her team. Help your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship in every game. Teach your child that hard work and an honest effort are often more important than victory.
2. **Always be positive**- Children learn more by example than by criticism. Work to be a positive role model, and reinforce positive behavior in others. Applaud good plays by others on your child's team as well as good plays by the opposing team. Do not criticize any child's performance from the sidelines. Accept the results of each game. Teach your child to be gracious in victory and to turn defeat into victory by learning and working toward improvement.
3. **Don't be a sideline coach or umpire** -Parents are not to coach their child during a game or practice. Parents who shout or scream from the stands often give inappropriate advice at the wrong time. The coach should be the only voice. You and your child will both enjoy the game more if you put some emotional distance between yourself and the field or play. Officials are symbols of fair play, integrity and sportsmanship - Do not openly question their judgment or honesty.
4. **Demonstrate a positive attitude toward your opponents and their families** -Opponents are not enemies. Take care to show good hospitality at home and to represent the Association in a positive way when playing other teams. Never allow yourself to be drawn into a verbal disagreement with opposing parents or coaches. No one has ever regretted letting "cooler heads prevail."

5. **Remember that your child wants to have fun** -Your child is the one playing softball, not you. Children must establish their own goals - to play the game for themselves. Take care not to impose unreasonable demands on your child. Let your children experience the fun of playing as well as the challenge of excelling. I/we will set a good example to my/our child in his/her softball development by adhering at all times to the following:
  - a. We will not criticize the umpire openly or directly, during or after games. Any criticism shall be done in writing, sent to my coach and my club representative, not verbally.
  - b. We will give only positive feedback to players.
  - c. We will cheer at all games within the spirit of fair play and shall do our best to cheer the effort regardless of the outcome. We will be mindful that loud cheering in “lopsided” games in which our team is winning by a large margin can be misunderstood and viewed as disrespectful to the other team.
  - d. We shall do our best to teach our players to become students of the game.
  - e. We shall show the quality of our sportsmanship during and after each game and help our child remember to thank the umpire after the game without regard to the result.
6. We shall do our very best to have our child prepared for every game. We will have our child arrive on time or early to all practices and games.
7. In the event you will not be able to get your child to a game or practice you must notify the coach with 24 hours notice. In the event of an emergency notify the coach as soon as reasonably possible.
8. In the event your child decides to play on additional sports teams but not limited to additional softball teams you must notify the coach within (7) days of acceptance to play on an additional sports team so any conflicts can be discussed.
9. We shall support the learning efforts of the players, the coaches, and the umpires by demonstrating our patience.
10. We understand that improper behavior at a game may result in a parent being asked to leave the field by the umpire, game official, or team supervisor or coach.
11. We shall leave the coaching to the coach during the game. We shall not give our child instructions during the game.
12. We will not enter the dugout or talk to our player during the game. We will do our best to provide our son water or sports drinks before the game or practice. We will also discourage our daughter from leaving the dugout to speak to us.
13. We understand that the coach or Association official can, and will if necessary, suspend our individual privilege to watch our child play should we behave in a manner that is rude or otherwise offensive.
14. We agree to do our best to have as much fun watching the game as the players should have playing the game.
15. We understand that the use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal substances during a game or amongst players is not acceptable.
16. We will not engage in making disparaging comments about team members, players, parents, coaches or the Association including verbally, written or through social media including but not limited to Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Intagram or text messages.

**Acknowledgement-** I/We have read, understand and hereby agree to abide by and support this Association's Parent's Code of Conduct. I/we understand that failure to abide by this code of conduct can cause me/us to be referred to the Association for possible disciplinary action which could include dismissal of our child from the Association.

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Disciplinary Action Procedure**

First offense Player / Parent/ Guardian	Verbal warning in a written form & Reduced playing time
Second Offense Player / Parent/ Guardian	Automatic (1) game suspension
Third Offense Player / Parent/ Guardian	Automatic removal from the team and Association

All coaches will have the authority to provide written (Verbal) warnings and (1) game suspensions without approval from the Association. In the event a (1) game suspension is issued the suspension must be served at a game while supporting the team. In the event the suspension is not served in person supporting the team this will result in automatic removal from the team and the Association.

**In the event there is a third violation or an egregious violation of any of the above rules of conduct the coach of such team with the violation can immediately petition the Association for immediate removal of the player and/or parent from the team and Association. The Association's decision is final.**

If a player is removed from the team or Association all funds paid will be forfeited to the Association.