

River City Jaguars

CODE OF CONDUCT



Zero Tolerance for Abuse

ABUSE TOLERANCE

The River City Jaguars, Inc., hereinafter, **Jaguars** has a **zero tolerance for abuse** in all youth sports teams, programs or activities. It is the responsibility of every coach and volunteer to participate in the effort to create a safe environment for all sports participants.

Definitions

JAGUARS ACTIVITY

A “**Jaguars Activity**” includes any sports program or related **Jaguars** sponsored program or event that qualify any coach, assistant coach, organization volunteer, or member of the Executive Board of Directors who has direct or indirect contact or influence on a minor athlete.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

Given the **Jaguars’ zero tolerance for abuse**, the **Jaguars** encourages a culture of communication regarding matters that place an athlete at risk.

The **Jaguars** supports and encourages a culture of communication related to abuse or suspected abuse of athletes. If you see or suspect inappropriate interaction with or between athletes, it is your responsibility to report the inappropriate interaction to the Middle School, Junior Varsity, or Varsity Head Coach or member of the Executive Board of Directors.

Because sexual abusers ‘groom’ athletes for abuse, it is possible that a coach or volunteer may witness behavior intended to ‘groom’ a child for sexual abuse. Coaches and volunteers are asked to report any ‘grooming’ behaviors, any policy violations, or any suspicious behaviors to the Middle School, Junior Varsity or Varsity Head Coach or a member of the Executive Board of Directors.

All reports of inappropriate behaviors or suspicions of abuse will be taken seriously and will be reported, in accordance with this Code of Conduct and state law, to law enforcement, Child Protective Services, or other appropriate agency.

ENFORCEMENT OF POLICIES

Coaches and volunteers who supervise other leaders are charged with the diligent enforcement of all athlete safety policies contained in this Code of Conduct. A violation of these policies can be grounds for immediate dismissal from the **Jaguars** Activities. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of the Executive Board of Directors.

REPORTING VIOLATION OF POLICY

In order to maintain a safe environment for athletes, coaches and volunteers must be aware of their individual responsibility to report any questionable circumstance, observation, act, omission, or situation that is a violation of these policies. All questions or concerns related to abuse or should be directed to a head coach or member of the Executive Board of Directors.

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION

Any person accused of committing a prohibited act or any act considered to be harmful to a child will be immediately suspended from all **Jaguars** activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by the **Jaguars**, law enforcement or any child protective agency.

Any person found to have committed a prohibited act may be prohibited from any future **Jaguars** Activity.

Failure to report a prohibited act as designated in this policy is a violation of this policy and grounds for dismissal or removal. Coaches or volunteers who fail to report a prohibited act may be restricted from participation in any **Jaguars** Activity.

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO AUTHORITIES

Indiana state law states that any person that has reason to believe that a child is the victim of child abuse or neglect shall make an immediate oral or written report to the Indiana Department of Child Services (“DCS”) or to a local law enforcement agency (Ind. Code § 31-33-5-1, -4). However, it is the policy of the **Jaguars** that all suspicions or allegations of abuse, regardless of state law requirements will be reported to the appropriate agency.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

When a report of abuse or neglect occurs, **Jaguars** representative/s will take the necessary and appropriate action to ensure a safe environment for the person at risk.

Prohibited Substances and Activities

INTOXICANTS

Coaches and volunteers are prohibited from being under the influence of alcohol or any illegal drugs while participating in any **Jaguars** Activity. Coaches and volunteers are prohibited from providing alcohol or illegal drugs to minor athletes or any other program participant.

TOBACCO

Jaguars programs and activities are tobacco-free. The **Jaguars** requires coaches and volunteers to refrain from the use or possession of tobacco products while in the presence of minor athletes or their parents. Coaches and volunteers are prohibited from providing tobacco products to minor athletes or any other program participant.

NUDITY

Coaches and volunteers that participate in the **Jaguars** Activities should never be nude in the presence of minor athletes or other program participant. Coaches and volunteers are further prohibited from undressing in the presence of a minor athlete of other program participant.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Coaches and volunteers that participate in **Jaguars** Activities are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with minor athletes. Coaches and volunteers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any minor athlete in the program or any other program participant. This provision includes the use of cellular phones, text messages, e-mail, instant messaging, Facebook, and online chat rooms or other social media. See also Electronic Communication and Social Media, below.

POSSESSION OF SEXUALLY ORIENTED MATERIALS

Coaches and volunteers that participate in **Jaguars** Activities are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, videos, etc.) while in the presence of minor athletes or any other program participant,

Physical Contact with Athletes

Appropriate physical contact between minor athletes and coaches or volunteers is a productive and inevitable part of sport. Athletes are more likely to acquire advanced physical skills and enjoy their sport participation through appropriate physical contact. However, guidelines for appropriate physical contact reduce the potential for abuse and misconduct in athletics – as well as false allegations of abuse.

APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT

The **Jaguars**, and organizations and individuals affiliated with the **Jaguars**, acknowledge and adhere to the following principles and guidelines regarding physical contact with minor athletes.

Common Criteria for Appropriate Physical Contact

Physical contact with minor athletes – for safety, consolation and celebration – has multiple criteria that make it both safe and appropriate. These include:

1. The physical contact takes place in public;
2. There is no potential for (or actual) physical or sexual intimacies during the physical contact;
3. The physical contact is for the benefit of the athlete, not to meet an emotional or other need of an adult.

Safety

The safety of minor athletes is paramount, and in many instances the athletic activity is made safer through appropriate physical contact. Examples include:

1. Spotting an athlete so that he or she will not be injured by a fall or piece of equipment;
2. Positioning an athlete's body so that he or she more quickly acquires an athletic skill, gets a better sense of where his or her body is in space, or improves balance and coordination;
3. Making athletes aware that he or she may be in harm's way due to other practicing athletes, or equipment use;
4. Releasing muscle cramps.

Celebration

Sports are physical by definition. The **Jaguars** recognizes that participants often express a joy of participation, competition, achievement and victory through physical acts. The **Jaguars** encourages these public expressions of celebration, which include:

1. Greeting gestures such as high-fives, fist bumps, and brief hugs;
2. Congratulatory gestures such as celebratory hugs, “jump-arounds” and pats on the back for any form of athletic or personal accomplishment.

Consolation

It may be appropriate to console an emotionally distressed athlete (e.g., an athlete who has been injured or has just lost a competition). Appropriate consolation includes, publicly:

1. Embracing a crying athlete – in a public place or circumstance;
2. Putting an arm around an athlete while verbally engaging them in an effort to calm them down (“side hugs”);
3. Lifting a fallen athlete off the playing surface and “dusting them off” to encourage them to continue competition.

PROHIBITED PHYSICAL CONTACT

Prohibited forms of physical contact include, without limitation:

1. Asking or having a minor athlete sit in the lap of a coach or volunteer;
2. Lingering or repeated embrace of a minor athlete that goes beyond the criteria set forth for acceptable physical contact;
3. Slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or any other physical contact meant to discipline, punish or achieve compliance from a minor athlete;
4. “Cuddling” or maintaining prolonged physical contact of a minor athlete during any aspect of training, travel or overnight stay;
5. Playful, yet inappropriate contact that is not a part of regular training, (e.g., butt-pats, tickling or wrestling-type “horseplay”);
6. Continued physical contact that makes a minor athlete obviously uncomfortable, whether expressed or not;
7. Any contact that is contrary to a previously expressed personal desire by the minor athlete for decreased or no physical contact, where such decreased contact is feasible in a competitive training environment.

The above physical contact is prohibited between adult and minor athlete AND between minor athletes. Coaches and volunteers must model the behavior expected from minor athletes. The above forms of Prohibited Physical Contact will be immediately reported to a team official, a league official, or other designated **Jaguars** representative.

Some forms of physical contact may constitute physical or sexual abuse that **must be reported to appropriate law enforcement authorities**. When appropriate, the Prohibited Physical Contact will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement authority.

Misconduct

BULLYING

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at any **Jaguars** Activity, and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to the victim. The **Jaguars** are committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all participants. If bullying does occur, incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Any minor athlete who is aware of bullying behavior is expected to tell a coach or member of the Executive Board of Directors.

Objectives of the **Jaguars'** Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To clearly communicate that the **Jaguars** will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give minor athletes, coaches, volunteers and parents a suitable understanding of those behaviors that constitute 'bullying'.
3. To make it known to minor athletes, coaches and volunteers that a policy and protocol exist should bullying issues arise.
4. To clearly communicate how to report bullying behavior.
5. To communicate to minor athletes, coaches, volunteers and parents that the **Jaguars** takes bullying seriously, and will immediately investigate and address all reports of bullying.

HARASSMENT

Harassment is the repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that

1. Are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance;
2. Offend or degrade;
3. Create a hostile environment;
4. Reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or mental or physical disability; or
5. Any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law.

Examples of harassment prohibited in the **Jaguars** Activities include, without limitation:

Physical offenses. Behaviors that include

1. Hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking or slapping a minor athlete or participant;
2. Throwing at or hitting a minor athlete with objects including sporting equipment.

Non-physical offenses. Behaviors that include

1. Making negative or disparaging comments about an athlete's disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits;
2. Displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols; and
3. Withholding or reducing playing time to an athlete based on his or her disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits.

HAZING

Hazing is defined as coercing, requiring, forcing or willfully tolerating any humiliating, unwelcome or dangerous activity that serves as a condition for

1. An athlete joining a group;
2. An athlete being socially accepted by a group's members; or
3. Any act or conduct described as hazing under federal or state law.

Hazing does not include group or team activities that are meant to establish normative team behaviors or promote team cohesion.

Examples of hazing prohibited in the **Jaguars** Activities include, without limitation:

1. Requiring, forcing or otherwise requiring an athlete to consume alcohol or illegal drugs;
2. Tying, taping or otherwise physically restraining an athlete;

3. Sexual simulations or sexual acts of any nature;
4. Sleep deprivation, otherwise unnecessary schedule disruption or the withholding of water and/or food;
5. Social actions (e.g. grossly inappropriate or provocative clothing) or public displays (e.g. public nudity) that are illegal or meant to draw ridicule;
6. Beating, paddling or other forms of physical assault; and
7. Excessive training requirements directed at a particular athlete or a group of athletes.

Activities that fit the definition of hazing are considered to be hazing regardless of an athlete's willingness to cooperate or participate.

WILLFULLY TOLERATING MISCONDUCT

It is a violation of this Code of Conduct if a coach, volunteer or participant knows of misconduct, but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the minor athlete(s). All forms of misconduct should be reported to a coach or member of the Executive Board of Directors.

PEER-TO-PEER SEXUAL ABUSE

Approximately 1/3 of all reported sexual abuse occurs at the hands of other children or minors. Coaches and volunteers have an obligation to report peer-to-peer sexual abuse in accord with state mandatory reporting requirements. Whether sexual interaction between athletes constitutes 'sexual abuse' depends on the existence of an aggressor and whether there is an imbalance of power between the parties (e.g., an age difference between the athletes, disparity in size or the existence of a physical or intellectual disability). **If you have concern that an interaction between minor athletes may constitute sexual abuse, report the interaction to appropriate law enforcement authorities and a coach or member of the Executive Board of Directors.**

Peer-to peer sexual abuse risk is highest:

1. Any location that is less easily seen; or
2. Any time minor athletes are unclothed or changing clothes, for any reason.

Due to this risk, coaches and volunteers will be aware of locations and facilities that are less easily seen or supervised. These locations and facilities vary per team and activity, and can include practice and competition locations, restrooms, changing areas, locker rooms, dorms and hotels. These areas will be supervised regularly by coaches and volunteers, where possible and appropriate.

Travel

For some **Jaguars** Activities, travel is a standard aspect a competitive season, and the **Jaguars** provides the following policies to reduce the risk of abuse and misconduct. Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase athlete safety and improve the competitive experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience.

Travel

Jaguars does not sponsor, coordinate, or arrange for travel. Athletes or their parents/guardians are responsible for making all travel arrangements. It is the responsibility of the athlete or their parents/guardians to ensure the person transporting the athlete maintains all safety and legal requirements, including, but not limited to, a valid driver's license, proper insurance, well maintained vehicle, and compliance with all state laws.

A coach or volunteer who is also an athlete's guardian may provide shared transportation for any athlete(s). In an effort to minimize one-on-one interactions, a coach or volunteer will not drive alone with an unrelated athlete and will drive with at least two other athletes or another adult at all times. In any case where a coach or volunteer is involved in the athlete's travel, a parental release is required in advance. A parental release can be given via text or email for documentation purposes.

Overnight Travel

Overnight travel can occur when the team competes locally, regionally, nationally or internationally over multiple days. Because of the greater distances, coaches and volunteers will often travel with athletes. However, no coach or volunteer will engage in team travel without the proper safety requirements in place, including a valid driver's license, proper insurance, well-maintained vehicle and compliance with all state laws.

For overnight travel the athlete (if 18 years of age or older) or the athlete's parents/guardians are responsible for making all travel arrangements for their athlete. For convenience of athletes and families the Jaguars often will arrange for a block of rooms at a hotel near the playing site. There is no requirement to stay at a hotel where the Jaguars have arranged a block of rooms. When the parent/legal guardian is unable to attend, it is at the discretion of the parents/legal guardian to make arrangements for travel and stay for their player. Any arrangements for accommodation of an athlete where the athlete shares a room with another athlete and/or another athlete's parents/guardian will be at the sole discretion of the parent/guardian.

Coaches, members of the Executive Board, and volunteers will not share a room with an athlete to whom they are not the parent or guardian. Exceptions to this policy are when written consent is provided by the unrelated athlete's parent/legal guardian. In no case will an organizational member be permitted to room alone with an unrelated athlete.

In the instance of shared accommodations between a coach, board members, or organizational volunteer and an unrelated athlete at no time shall the organizational representative be alone in a hotel room with the unrelated athlete. In those instances where a shared room between a coach, member of the Executive Board, or organizational volunteer and an unrelated athlete occurs, the **Jaguars** Code of Conduct will still apply. Of note are regulations concerning nudity and undress during shared accommodations between organizational representatives and unrelated athletes.

COACH AND VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

During team travel, coaches and volunteers will help athletes, fellow coaches and volunteers adhere to policy guidelines, including the travel policies and reporting policies.

When not practicing, training, competing, or preparing for competition, coaches and volunteers will monitor the activities of athletes, fellow coaches and volunteers during team travel. Coaches and volunteers will:

1. Prepare athletes for team travel and make athletes aware of all expectations. Supplemental information will be given to parents/guardians of athletes who are considered inexperienced travelers, new or relatively new to team travel, or who are under the age of 14;
2. Familiarize themselves with all travel itineraries and schedules before the initiation of team travel;
3. Conform to, and monitor for others' adherence, the policies of the Code of Conduct and all other team policies during team travel;
4. Encourage minor athletes to participate in regular communication with their parents/guardians;
5. Help athletes be on time for all team commitments (as possible);
6. Assist with team travel logistical needs (as possible);
7. Support chaperones and/or participate in the monitoring of athletes for adherence to curfew restrictions based on age and competition schedule, as listed in travel itinerary;
8. Ensure athletes are complying with hotel room restrictions based on gender or age requirements;
9. Make certain that athletes are not alone in a hotel rooms with any adult apart from a family member, including coaches, volunteers and chaperones;
10. Refrain from using drugs or alcohol in the presence of minors or be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing any program or coaching duty;
11. Immediately report any concerns about physical or sexual abuse, misconduct, or policy violations;
12. Notify parents before taking any significant disciplinary action against a minor athlete if the athlete is traveling without his or her parents.

CHAPERONE RESPONSIBILITIES

Chaperones accompany team travel to ensure that the athletes, coaches and volunteers adhere to schedules and guidelines, including the travel policy and all other relevant policies contained in the Code of Conduct. Each chaperone must undergo a background check screening and follow all **Jaguars** Bylaws, Rules & Policies. (e.g. including Code of Conduct).

Communication & Social Media

SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAIL, TEXTING AND ALL OTHER FORMS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Board members, coaches, and volunteers can communicate with minor athletes through electronic media, all such communication shall be in group form and/or public (no private communication). All posts, messages, texts, or media of any kind between board members, coaches, volunteers and minor athletes must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes.

All communication shall be readily available to share with minor athlete's family upon request. Additionally, at the request of a parent or guardian; emails, electronic text, social media or similar communication will copy or include the athlete's parents or guardians.

The use of Snapchat (and similar apps) with athletes is not permitted.

ELECTRONIC IMAGERY

From time to time, digital photos, videos of practice or competition, and other publicly obtainable images of the minor athlete – individually or in groups – may be taken. These photos and/or videos may be used for athlete instruction (i.e. practice and game films), team videos, team websites, or offered to the athletes' families. The use of photos/videos is permissible as long as the athlete or athletes are in public view and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the athlete and the program. Photo or video imagery must not be contrary to any rules or guidance outlined in this Code of Conduct.

REQUEST TO DISCONTINUE

The parent or guardian of a minor athlete may request in writing that their athlete not be contacted by coaches through any electronic communication; that request must be honored. Additionally, a parent or guardian of a minor athlete may request in writing that photographs or videography of their athlete not be posted on program or team websites, understanding that group photography or videography may render this impracticable; to the extent this request is practicable, it should be honored.

MISCONDUCT

Social media and electronic communication can be used inappropriately. (e.g., emotional abuse, sexual abuse, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communication by coaches, volunteers, officials, administrators, parents or other athletes will not be tolerated.

Electronic communication should not contain or relate to any of the following:

1. Drugs or alcohol use;
2. Sexually oriented conversation, sexually explicit language or sexual activity;
3. An adult's personal life, social activities, relationship or family issues, or personal problems; and
4. Inappropriate or sexually explicit pictures.

Any communication concerning a minor athlete's personal life, social activities, relationships, family issues or personal problems must be transparent, accessible and professional.

Parental Contact and Involvement

PARENTAL CONTACT

Parents of minor athletes will be contacted if their athlete becomes ill, injured, or has a severe disciplinary problem while participating in **Jaguar** Activities.

Screening and Education

JAGUAR ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS

All Jaguar coaches, members of the Executive Board of Directors, and organizational volunteers will be required to successfully complete the Jaguar screening process before permitted to work within the Jaguar organization. The screening process will include an application, interview, background check, and reference checks. Additionally all coaches, Executive Board of Director members, and organizational volunteers will be required to affirm that he or she has read and agrees to adhere to the policies within this Code of Conduct.

Prior to beginning in any organizational role, the applicant will be required to successfully complete Jaguar training concerning child abuse.

The Executive Board of Directors reserves the right to deny a position within the organization for any reason other than those protected by law. In such cases the reason for the denial will be provided to the applicant who may appeal the decision to the Executive Board of Directors. The applicant may address specific concerns or provide additional information for consideration to the Executive Board of Directors.

One-on-One Interactions/Individual Meetings

An individual meeting may be necessary to address an athlete's concerns, training program, or competition schedule. Under these circumstances, coaches, board members, or organizational volunteers are to observe the following guidelines when working with athletes:

MEETING

A meeting is defined as a one-on-one interaction that occurs between an organizational representative and a minor athlete that due to the sensitivity of the subject matter occurs in a more private setting than on the practice or game field. An example of a meeting is where a minor athlete requests to speak to a coach in private about his or her playing time and the meeting takes place in a park shelter/gazebo or in an office.

Isolated, one-on-one interactions between minors and an organizational representative (who is not the minor's legal guardian) are prohibited, except under emergency circumstances.

Meetings between coaches and minor athletes may only occur if another adult is present to monitor the meeting except in emergency circumstances. Monitoring includes knowing that the one-on-one interaction is occurring, the approximate planned duration of the interaction,

and randomly dropping in on the one-on-one. Such meetings must occur where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult.

If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office, the door to the office must remain unlocked and open. If available, it will occur in an office that has windows, with the windows, blinds and/or curtains remain open during the meeting and must be observable by another adult.

OUT OF PROGRAM CONTACTS

Organizational representatives are prohibited from interacting one-on-one with unrelated minor athletes in private settings outside of the program (including, but not limited to, one's home and individual transportation), unless parent/legal guardian consent is provided for each out-of-program contact. Such arrangements are strongly discouraged.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING SESSIONS

An individual training session with an athlete (meaning not a team training session, but a training session involving one athlete and one coach/trainer) may be necessary in order to further player development. Under these circumstances, the individual training session will be conducted in a public venue such as a park and monitored by a third party. Additionally, parent/guardian permission is required in advance of the individual training session(s) and parents are welcome to attend the individual training. Parents, guardians and other caretakers must be allowed to observe individual training sessions. Permission for individual training sessions must be obtained at least every six months.