



Upward Sports CODE OF CONDUCT

DOUBLE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH

POLICIES & PROCEDURES for UPWARD SPORTS MINISTRIES

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Zero Tolerance for Abuse

ABUSE TOLERANCE

Upward Sports has **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

UPWARD SPORTS ACTIVITY

“Upward Sports” includes any program, league or activity that qualify any coach, assistant coach, team training, team manager, referee, league president, league commissioner, labor employee, or any other individual over the age of 18 seeking affiliation with any affiliated program within Upward Sports who has direct or indirect contact or influence on a minor athlete.

Reporting Abuse or Suspicions of Abuse

REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Upward Sports 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 a coach, supervisor, team official, league official, or other designated Upward Sports representative.

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 an Upward Sports commissioner or coordinator, the Children’s Minister or the Executive Pastor.

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 Upward Sports Activities. Final decisions related to policy violations will be the responsibility of a designated Upward Sports representative.

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 designated Upward Sports representative, Children's Minister or Executive Pastor.

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 Upward Sports activities. This suspension will continue during any investigation by Upward Sports, law enforcement or any child protective agency.

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

REPORTING SUSPICIONS OF ABUSE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Employees and volunteers at Double Oak Community Church are required to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect, or any inappropriate behavior of a colleague or co-worker, to the Age Group Minister or the Executive Pastor.

Alabama law requires that any person having cause to believe a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect must make a report to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Employees and volunteers *may* report to the Age Group Minister or the Executive Pastor, and allow them to make the appropriate report to law enforcement agencies. In no way does any provision in this policy discourage any employee or volunteer from reporting a suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

Employees and volunteers are required to verbally report an incident to the Age Group Minister or the Executive Pastor as soon as possible after the incident.

RESPONSE TO REPORT OF ABUSE

Double Oak Community Church Leadership will take appropriate action on behalf of the church when a report of abuse occurs.

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 Upward Sports Activity. Coaches and volunteers are prohibited from providing alcohol or illegal drugs to minor athletes or any other program participant. A coach or volunteer should report to their supervisor if they are taking prescription medication which might pose a risk to the safety of children.

TOBACCO

Upward Sports programs and activities are tobacco-free. Upward Sports 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.

NUDITY

Coaches and volunteers that participate in Upward Sports Activities should never be nude in the presence of minor athletes.

SEXUALLY ORIENTED CONVERSATIONS

Coaches and volunteers that participate in Upward Sports 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. 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 are prohibited from possessing (or transmitting to a child) any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, images, videos, films, etc.) on church property or in the presence of children in their care.

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

Upward Sports, and organizations and individuals affiliated with Upward Sports, 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. Upward Sports recognizes that participants often express a joy of participation, competition, achievement and victory through physical acts. Upward Sports 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, massages, or wrestling-type “horseplay” are all prohibited);
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 Upward Sports 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 Upward Sports Activity, and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to the victim. Upward Sports is 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, team official, league official, or other designated Upward Sports representative.

Objectives of Upward Sports' Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To clearly communicate that Upward Sports 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 Upward Sports 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 Upward Sports 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 Upward Sports 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, team official, league official, or other designated **Upward Sports** representative.

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, team official, league official or other designated Upward Sports representative.**

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.

Electronic Communications & Social Media

All electronic communications between a coach and minor athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about program activities.

As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the athlete's family. Any email, electronic text, social media or similar communication will copy or include the athlete's parents or guardians.

FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, BLOGS AND SIMILAR SITES

Coaches or volunteers can communicate with minor athletes through sites like Facebook, but all communication needs to be in group form and public (no private communication). If a Facebook page is used, all coaches and parents must be included. Coaches may not have athletes join a personal social media page. All posts, messages, texts, or media of any kind shared among athletes or between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes.

TWITTER, INSTANT MESSAGING AND SIMILAR MEDIA

All communication is to be public in nature. Coaches and minor athletes may "follow" each other. Coaches cannot "re-tweet" athlete message posts. Coaches and volunteers are not permitted to "direct message" minor athletes through Twitter (or similar media).

Coaches and volunteers are not permitted to post inappropriate off-color content or comment on inappropriate off-color posts. If there is doubt, treat the content as inappropriate.

EMAIL AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate if the athlete is at least 14 years of age. All email content between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about program activities. The minor athlete's parent or guardian must be copied on e-mail communications. Email communication between coaches and minor athletes is allowed during the hours of 7am and 10pm.

TEXTING AND SIMILAR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Texting is allowed between coaches and a minor athlete if the athlete is at least 14 years of age. Where possible, texts between a coach and an athlete must be a group text – the text must include another athlete, volunteer, a parent, or another coach/assistant. Each athlete's parent or guardian must be included in the group text. All texts between a coach and an athlete must be professional and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities. No texting is allowed between a coach and an athlete before 7am or after 10pm, unless there is a specific activity that requires a text communication.

The use of Snapchat (and similar apps) with minor 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 an Upward Sports Activity.

Policies and Procedures
Statement of Acknowledgment and Agreement

I have received and read a copy of DOUBLE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH's Upward Sports Policies and Procedures Manual and understand the importance of the matters set forth within the manual. I agree to follow and abide by these guidelines during my service with Upward Sports Ministries.

Further, I understand that the manual may be modified at any time, and that any guidelines may be amended, revised, or eliminated at any time by DOUBLE OAK COMMUNITY CHURCH.

I also acknowledge that I have reviewed and agree to fulfill the duties listed in the Manual.

Finally, I understand that it is my responsibility to review new guidelines that are created and distributed, as well as manual guidelines that are changed or deleted. I hereby acknowledge receipt of Upward Sports Ministries policies and procedures manual.

Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

Staff Member or Volunteer's signature

Date: _____

*Applicant should keep this copy.

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Staff Member or Volunteer's name (please print)

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Date: _____

*Please return this copy to the Upwards Ministries Coordinator