



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The safety and well-being of all participants in Caddo Parish Parks and Recreation (CPPR) youth athletic/recreational programs are paramount. CPPR promotes a wholesome leisure program environment where young people grow up happy, healthy, and, above all, safe. CPPR does not tolerate any type of abuse against a minor, including, but not limited to, sexual, physical, mental, and emotional (as well as any type of bullying, hazing, or harassment). The severity of these types of incidents is life-altering for the child and all who are involved.

The goal of the CPPR Child Protection Policy is to prevent child abuse from occurring through an application screening process for all required volunteers and/or hired workers, ongoing training for its staff and volunteers, increased awareness, and mandatory reporting of any abuse. CPPR is committed to enforcing this policy!

CPPR has established a zero-tolerance culture that does not allow any type of activity that promotes or allows any form of misconduct or abuse (mental, physical, emotional, or sexual) between recreation program participants, players, coaches, parents/guardians/caretakers, spectators, volunteers, and/or any other individual. CPPR staff/volunteers shall remove any individual that is exhibiting any type of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct and report the individual to the authorities immediately.

MANDATORY REPORTING OF CHILD ABUSE

Who are Mandated Reporters?

Mandated reporters are volunteers involved with children in any capacity or any of the following individuals performing their occupational duties:

- **Organizational or Youth Activity Provider** is any person who provides organized activities for children, including administrators, employees, or volunteers of any day camp, summer camp, youth center, or youth recreation programs or any other organization that provides organized activities for children.
- **Coach** is any school coach including but not limited to public technical or vocational school, community college, college or university coaches and coaches of intramural or interscholastic athletics

How to Report Child Abuse- The Louisiana Children's Code (Article 610) specifies that mandated reporters shall make reports immediately upon learning of incidents of child abuse or neglect. When you have reason to believe a child may have been abused or neglected by a parent

or caretaker, immediately contact local law enforcement or the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) at 1-855-4LA-KIDS (855-452-5437).

Reports made orally must be followed by a written report to DCFS or local law enforcement within five days. A form (CPI-2) for this purpose is available at www.dcf.la.gov/abuse. If the child abuse or neglect is by someone other than a parent or caretaker, it shall be reported to the local law enforcement agency.

RELATED CRIMINAL CODE PROVISIONS

La. R.S. 14:403 mandates any person who is eighteen years of age or older who witnesses the sexual abuse of a child to report the abuse to law enforcement or the Department of Children and Family Services as required by Children's Code Article 610.

La. R.S. 14:131.1 mandates any person having knowledge of the commission of any homicide, rape, or sexual abuse of a child to report such information to a law enforcement agency or district attorney, except when the person having such knowledge is bound by any privilege of confidentiality recognized by law.

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES FOR MANDATED REPORTERS?

Any person who is required to report the abuse or neglect of a child and knowingly and willfully fails to do so shall be fined not more than \$500, imprisoned for not more than six months, or both. If the abuse is sexual or results in serious bodily injury, neurological impairment, or death of the child, a mandated reporter who knowingly and willfully fails to report it shall be fined not more than \$3,000, imprisoned, with or without hard labor, for not more than three years, or both.

Any person who has knowledge of the commission of any homicide, rape, or sexual abuse of child and fails to report or disclose it to a law enforcement agency or district attorney, unless bound by privilege of confidentiality recognized by law, shall be fined not more than \$500, or imprisoned, with or without hard labor, for not more than one year or both.

Any person 18 or older who witnesses the sexual abuse of a child and knowingly and willfully fails to report to law enforcement or DCFS, as required by Children's Code Article 610, shall be fined not more than \$10,000, imprisoned, with or without hard labor, for not more than five years or both.

As a mandated reporter, you may be requested to testify regarding any incident of which you have direct knowledge if the case becomes the subject of legal or judicial action.

State law protects the identity of all mandated reporters, and you are given immunity from legal liability as a result of reports you make in good faith.

APPROPRIATE ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION GUIDELINES

An adult participant should not allow themselves to be alone with a minor (who is not their child) and should always position themselves in an area where they can be observed by others. Minors must always be supervised by appointed volunteers and/or hired workers who have completed the mandated background check. If an adult participant finds himself or herself alone with a child, he or she should remedy the situation by removing themselves to an area within an observable and/or interruptible distance of another adult over the age of 18.

Practices, Games or Recreational Programs

- **Encourage the Buddy System:** There is safety in numbers. Encourage players/program participants to move about in groups of two or more children of similar age, whether an approved adult is present or not. This includes travel, leaving the field, or using the restroom areas. It's far more difficult to victimize a child if they're not alone. If an approved adult must accompany a minor to another location, a minor of the same age or another approved adult should accompany them. All interactions between minors and adults should be observable and within an interruptible distance of another adult.
- **Toilet Facilities:** CPPR youth sport league/recreation program participants can use toilet facilities on their own, so there should be no need for an adult to accompany a child into restroom areas. However, there can sometimes be special circumstances under which a child requires assistance to use the toilet facilities. For example, Tee Ball division participants or youth with special needs. In this case, there may be a need for adult assistance, but there should still be adequate privacy for that child and there must be another approved adult/caregiver who is within an observable and/or interruptible distance from you and the child you are assisting. Again, the "buddy system" should be utilized in instances like this.
- **Access to Certain Facilities:** League/recreation program volunteers and/or hired workers must not allow any minors to enter an unsecured area without reviewing the area first. Controlling access to areas where children are present, such as restrooms, dugouts or locker rooms, etc.. protects them from potential abuse and/or harm by outsiders. It's not easy to control the access of large outdoor facilities, but visitors could be directed to a central point within the facility. Individuals should not be allowed to wander through the area without the knowledge of approved staff individuals.
- **Proper Supervision:** Minors must always be within the visual contact of an approved volunteer and/or hired workers when outside to verify that they are not approached by a stranger or an individual who is not permitted near the minors. Also, this helps to verify that the minors are participating in safe activities. If you cannot see a player/program participant, then they are not being properly supervised. Adults should still respect the minor's privacy in toilet facilities as outlined above.

Transportation

• **Rides:** Children dropped off too early or picked up late are potential targets. Parents and approved volunteers should be encouraged to pick up and drop off on time. CPPR encourages talking to all youth participating in our athletic/recreational programs about safety issues. Children should be warned about the risk of strangers and how to avoid accepting rides from anyone that was not pre-arranged by their parent/legal guardian. Children should also be told to always tell someone if they're approached by a stranger for any reason, even if it seems innocent, like to help the stranger find a pet. If a player is left unattended after a practice/game by their parent or guardian, the coach or manager must ask another approved adult to stay behind to wait for the parent/guardian. **Note:** Caddo Parish Parks and Recreation employees/staff shall not transport youth athletic/recreation program participants in their personal vehicles.

Physical Contact

• Physical contact between volunteers and/or hired workers with minors should be very limited. Some examples of appropriate physical touch should be limited to high fives, fist bumps, or administering appropriate first aid.

PROHIBITED ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION GUIDELINES

To minimize the chance of an individual's opportunity to groom a minor, the following practices relating to one-on-one interactions between a minor athlete/recreation program participant and an approved adult volunteer, or hired worker should be followed:

- A minor athlete/recreation program participant will not be left unattended or unsupervised at any time. The minor athlete/program participant should always be within the sight of an approved staff/volunteer.
- Volunteers or hired workers are prohibited from being alone with minor athletes unless:
 - There is an emergency.
 - There is written permission from the minor's parent/legal guardian.
 - The volunteer or hired worker is the minor athlete's parent/legal guardian, or personal care assistant.
- Volunteers or hired workers should not interact one-on-one with unrelated minor athletes in settings outside the regular scope of the athletic/recreation program (e.g. the volunteer's home, a restaurant, a vehicle, personal communication including electronic communication).
- Minor athletes/recreation program participants may not reside with unrelated volunteers or hired workers for the purpose of participation qualification. **NOTE:** If a volunteer is in a position where he/she is left alone with a player/recreation program participant, they should not leave the child so

long as the volunteer has exhausted all of the options above to comply with the guidelines of the policy. Likewise, if a child is injured and must be transported to a hospital, urgent care, or treatment center, the volunteer should not leave the child alone if all options have been exhausted to comply with the policy in an emergency where medical treatment is necessary.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION TO PREVENT CHILD ABUSE

Education is an important tool for participating youth sport children and volunteers. It empowers them to recognize potentially compromising situations, and it places a barrier between abusers and their victims. Here are a few education tools and prevention suggestions for our league volunteers, hired workers, and children.

- **Training:** Training will be strongly encouraged for all youth sport league/recreation program participants, including staff via organizational/parent meetings. These educational sessions will provide resources to create a positive and safe environment for all athletes/program participants, coaches, and parents/legal guardians-by understanding how to recognize misconduct and abuse of all types.
- **Meetings with Volunteers:** Caddo Parish Parks and Recreation youth sport leagues and recreational programs are volunteer-led, our volunteers change from year to year. CPPR staff will facilitate regular meetings in which both volunteers and parents can talk about child abuse and ask questions.
- **Make Our Position Clear:** Caddo Parish Parks and Recreation Department has a clearly defined policy for dealing with child abuse, with emphasis to make adults and minors aware that Caddo Parks and Recreation youth leagues/recreation programs will not tolerate child abuse in any form. Suspected abuse must be reported and retaliation for good faith reporting is prohibited.
- **Stress the Role of Adults:** Minors should be encouraged to take an active role in protecting themselves, but the responsibility for ensuring their safety ultimately rests with the adults. We can identify potentially uncomfortable situations, for ourselves, as well as for children. The welfare of our youth sport league/recreation program participants are the highest priority in any situation.

BULLYING AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Caddo Parish Parks and Recreation is focused on the total well-being of our program participants. Any type of bullying can have serious effects on players. Anyone who engages in harassment, in any form (verbal, physical, cyber, etc.), or commits violence or acts of intimidation shall be prohibited from participating in Little League. This applies to player-to-player / youth-to-youth, adult-to-player / adult-to-youth, player-to-adult / youth-to-adult, and adult-to-adult interactions. CPPR strive to have a safe and encouraging environment for all participants.

The following types of behavior will not be accepted in Caddo Parish Parks and Recreation youth sport leagues/recreational programs:

- **Physical Bullying:** Hitting, pushing, shoving, punching, strangling, hair-pulling, stealing, excessive tickling, or any other deliberate and inappropriate touching.
- **Verbal Bullying:** Hurtful, deliberate name-calling, banter, taunting, intimidating, threatening, gossiping, and teasing.
- **Emotional Bullying:** Rejection, terrorizing, extorting, humiliating, blackmailing, rating/ranking of personal characteristics, such as race, disability, ethnicity, or perceived sexual orientation, manipulating friendships, isolating, and peer pressure.
- **Social/Cyber Bullying:** Deliberately excluding, alienating, ignoring, spreading rumors, impersonation, inappropriate photographs, video shaming, and hacking social media accounts.
- **Harassment:** Harassment includes bullying and all of the actions listed above, as well as subjecting someone to unwanted sexual advances, involving physical contact or explicit written or verbal language.
- **Hazing:** An initiation, ritual process involving different types of harassments that intentionally humiliates the individual or a group.

Creating a Player/Participant-Centric Environment

Both children and adults may experience frustration at times. It is important to recognize when a person needs to take a break from activities to calm down. Adult volunteers and hired workers should never escalate a situation when someone is upset. Instead, they should attempt to de-escalate any stressful situation.

If an individual (player/program participant, staff/volunteer, or parent) feels they are stressed out and cannot handle the situation, they should remove themselves from the area until the issue is de-escalated.

ENFORCEMENT/DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

CPPR youth sport leagues/recreational programs shall not allow any type of activity that promotes or allows any form of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct behavior between players, coaches, parents, volunteers, hired workers, and any other individual. Department staff shall remove any individual(s) that exhibit any type of mental, physical, emotional, or sexual misconduct; and department staff/volunteers shall report the individual to the authorities immediately.

Any violations of the policies mentioned may result in the suspension or revocation of participating in CPPR youth sport leagues or related recreational programs.