



Arlington Girls' Softball Association

Statement of Policy

Policy Name: Code of Conduct
Date Adopted: January 3, 2008
Adopted by: AGSA Executive Board

1 SCOPE.

This policy applies to the Arlington Girls' Softball Association (AGSA) and to all of its subsidiary organizations, including but not limited to AGSA's House leagues and teams and to the teams fielded under the AGSA Tournament Team program.

2 APPLICABILITY.

This section describes the times during which this policy applies.

2.1 General Applicability.

This policy applies to all members and associate members of AGSA, hereafter denoted as "AGSA members" for the purposes of this document, while they are participating in AGSA-recognized events, including but not limited to House League practices and games; Tournament Team practices, games, and tournaments; and transit to and from such Tournament Team events.

2.2 Special Considerations for Travel Teams.

In the case of Tournament Team tournaments, the policy applies to each AGSA member during the entire time the AGSA member is present at the tournament, including times when the AGSA member is waiting for the next participatory event to start, and times when the AGSA member is preparing to leave the tournament; for overnight events it includes the entire overnight period.

3 STATEMENT OF POLICY.

The primary purpose of AGSA is to promote and supervise the girls' fastpitch softball program established under the Arlington County Sports Division of the Arlington County government, and operating under the guidelines of the Amateur Softball Association (ASA). In support of these goals, AGSA members are expected to follow those standards of behavior that reflect favorably on AGSA, and are enjoined from participating in activities, behaviors, and conduct prejudicial to the name and purpose of AGSA (Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2, dated January 30, 1997; and succeeding editions).

4 AGSA MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES AND STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

This section describes those behaviors expected of AGSA members, as well as responsibilities accruing to each class of AGSA member.

4.1 Player Responsibilities and Standards.

A player shall:

- attend practices, games, and tournaments. A player shall notify the head coach of her team promptly when she cannot attend an event.
- show up prepared for all events by getting proper rest, being clothed or uniformed properly, and bringing her equipment (fielding glove, cleats, batting glove, etc.) in good working order.
- follow coaches' directions by working attentively at drills without requiring constant supervision; by paying attention at all times; and by not distracting other players.
- cheer for her team positively in the spirit of good sportsmanship; avoid public criticism of teammates; and refrain from shouting negative comments or cheers about other teams or game officials. Examples of such negative comments include statements that the opposing pitcher is slow or that the batter is a poor hitter.
- help other players upon request of the coach.
- assist the coaches as requested in setting up and putting away equipment, supplies, and stations.
- refrain from publicly criticizing or questioning the coach's calls or decisions. If a player has a concern or disagreement with the coach, that player should discuss that concern with the coach in private.

4.2 Parent responsibilities.

The parent of a player shall:

- supply registration information, including a birth certificate, and pay team fees when requested to do so.
- ensure that the player attends practices, games, and tournaments, and that the head coach is notified promptly when a player cannot attend an event. If a player misses the practices preceding a tournament, the player's absence will affect her playing time and position in the tournament.
- cheer the team positively, avoid public criticism of any AGSA players, and refrain from shouting negative comments or cheers about competing teams or the umpires.
- refrain from publicly criticizing or questioning the coach's call or decisions. If a parent has a concern or disagreement with the coach, that parent should discuss that concern with the coach in private.
- refrain from giving directions to players at games or practices. Only the coaches and, in certain cases, players are authorized to provide directions to other players.
- assist in team activities as assigned by or requested by the head coach. Examples include providing refreshments and making hotel reservations.

4.3 Coach responsibilities.

A coach shall:

- provide a learning experience that promotes the development of each player's skills and knowledge of softball.
- plan and organize practices to make efficient use of time and foster a productive learning experience.
- ensure a positive environment and good sportsmanship by enforcing the code of conduct.
- give feedback on player performance in a positive manner.
- treat players with courtesy and respect.
- cheer the team positively, avoid public criticism of players, refrain from making negative comments or cheers about competing teams, and refrain from baiting umpires or expressing disagreement with an umpire's decision in an offensive or unsportsmanlike way.
- keep players and parents informed about team plans, policies, practices, and games.
- keep players and parents informed about plans for player development, and to inform a player's parents about her progress in her development.
- be candid about expectations regarding playing time and positions to be played.

5 PROHIBITED BEHAVIORS¹.

5.1 Introduction

This Code of Conduct serves as a guide toward achieving standards of behavior for both athlete and non-athlete AGSA members. As such, it includes descriptions and examples of proscribed activities, behaviors, and conduct that include, but are not limited to, the following.

- Use of illegal substances, medically inadvisable substances, or substances banned by the NCAA is prohibited, as is making these substances available to others.
- AGSA members shall not create or participate in any activity that creates an atmosphere of humiliation, degradation, abuse, or danger to others.
- Hooliganism, vandalism, defacing of objects, graffiti writing, fighting, and other public misbehavior are prohibited by AGSA members while participating in AGSA events.

Examples of prohibited behaviors are shown in the tables at the end of this Statement of Policy.

5.2 Classification of Prohibited Behaviors

A table appended to this Statement of Policy lists examples of prohibited behaviors in various classes or levels of severity. The table is not intended to be exhaustive or comprehensive. The levels of misconduct include minor, serious, and severe misconduct.

¹ Material in this section leans heavily on the George Mason University Student Athlete Handbook (http://grfx.cstv.com/photos/schools/gema/genrel/auto_pdf/stud-ath-handbook.pdf); the Olentangy Schools Athletic Handbook (<http://www.olentangy.k12.oh.us/district/board/policy/handbooks/athletic/06dat.html>); the Altus Public Schools Student Athlete Training Policy; and the Waterview Public Schools Extra-Curricular Substance Abuse Policy ([http://www.wtv1.k12.me.us/policies/JPolicy/JFCF\(1\).html](http://www.wtv1.k12.me.us/policies/JPolicy/JFCF(1).html)).

Upon receipt of a complaint of misbehavior, the AGSA Executive Board will determine, by majority vote of a quorum of the Executive Board, which level of severity a particular misbehavior attains, irrespective of whether the accused person is found to have misbehaved. The Recording Secretary shall record the nature of the alleged misbehavior and the Executive Board's judgment as to the level of severity of that misbehavior, and shall retain those records in the special place designated for such records (see Record Keeping, below).

Incidents of misconduct are cumulative over the lifetime of an AGSA member's association with AGSA.

5.3 Accusations of conduct violation.

The procedure for bringing an accusation of policy violation to the attention of AGSA is as follows:

1. Anyone may bring an allegation of violation of this policy to any adult member of AGSA.
2. The adult member of AGSA must communicate all allegations of violation to a member of the AGSA Executive Board within 48 hours of having received the allegation.
3. The Executive Board member receiving the allegation shall notify the AGSA President within 48 hours of having received the allegation.
4. The President of AGSA shall inform the Executive Board of the receipt of an allegation of a violation of this policy and shall convene an extraordinary meeting of the Executive Board within 7 calendar days of having been notified of an allegation of violation of this policy.
5. The purpose of the extraordinary meeting of the Executive Board shall be for the President of AGSA to communicate the allegation to the Executive Board, for the Executive Board to discuss the allegation, and to schedule a hearing on the allegation. The hearing is to be scheduled to take place within 7 calendar days of the date of the extraordinary meeting.

All incidents of alleged misconduct rising to the levels described in this document must be reported to the Executive Board; neither coaches nor AGSA officials shall take it onto themselves to treat the matter privately.

The Executive Board will inform the AGSA member and her parents of any allegations made against her.

5.4 Accused's Right to Hearing

Persons accused of violating this policy have a right to a hearing before a quorum of the Executive Board. A quorum of the Executive Board must be present for the hearing to be valid under this Statement of Policy.

A hearing shall be offered to the person accused of violating this AGSA policy, to be held within 7 calendar days of the Executive Board's extraordinary meeting mentioned in Article 5.3 above.

The person accused of violating this AGSA policy will be given the opportunity at their hearing to refute the allegation and to produce witnesses and evidence that they did not violate this

policy. Athlete members of AGSA shall be expected to be accompanied by one or both of their parents.

If the accused elects not to attend the offered hearing for any reason, the Executive Board will adjudicate the incident without input from the accused person. Witnesses may be asked to attend the adjudication session.

5.5 Adjudication.

Immediately after hearing the evidence, continuous in time with the hearing, the Executive Board shall discuss the allegation and the evidence for violation, and shall decide, based on evidence presented, whether the alleged incident occurred and will determine the appropriate sanction. A quorum of the Executive Board must be present for the hearing and adjudication to be valid. The decision shall be determined by a two-thirds vote of the quorum of the Executive Board present at the hearing.

5.6 Right of appeal.

If the person accused of violation of this policy does not agree with the conclusion of the Executive Board, that person has the right to appeal to the general AGSA Board. An appeal must be submitted in writing to the President or other Executive Board member within 7 calendar days of the adjudication hearing. If such an appeal is submitted, the President shall convene an extraordinary meeting of the AGSA General Board within 14 days of the adjudication hearing for the purpose of hearing the appeal. If no quorum for an extraordinary meeting of the AGSA General Board can be obtained within 14 days of the adjudication hearing, then the President shall convene an extraordinary meeting of the AGSA General Board as soon as a quorum can be obtained.

The appeal shall be conducted in a manner similar to that described for the original hearing, except the decision-making body shall be the AGSA General Board. For the purposes of an appeal, a quorum of the AGSA General Board shall comprise the Executive Board plus a number of non-Executive Board members that is at least two times plus one greater than the number of voting members of the Executive Board (e.g., if the Executive Board comprises 5 members, a quorum of the General Board for an appeal will be a quorum of Executive Board members plus, at minimum, 11 non-Executive Board members).

Decisions shall be made by two-thirds vote.

The decision of the extraordinary meeting of the AGSA General Board on the allegation is final; no further right of appeal is envisioned.

5.7 Sanctions.

Introduction.

Sanctions for violation of this policy will vary according to the seriousness of the violation. In general, sanctions should be such that the violator will have the opportunity to learn to accept responsibility for their actions. Consequences to the viability or competitiveness of an AGSA team shall not be considered by the Executive Board when deciding upon sanction.

Two-thirds of the quorum of the Executive Board present at the adjudication hearing must agree with a proposed sanction for it to be applied. If the allegation is determined by vote to have

occurred, but two-thirds of the Executive Board cannot agree on a proposed sanction, the listed minimum sanction will be applied.

A series of definitions and minimum sanctions are listed below. A table of example misconduct, categorized by severity, can be found in the next section. The table of misconduct is intended as a set of examples for use as guidance by the Executive Board, and shall not be taken to be a comprehensive list.

Definitions

A *game* is a standard, multi-inning fastpitch softball game.

Number of games in a season is determined as follows: for each single game, count 1; for each double-header count 2; and for each scheduled multi-game tournament count 4. All games in a season, both completed and planned, shall be counted (e.g., if 3 single games, 4 double headers, and 5 tournaments are scheduled in a playing season, the number of games in that season is $(3 \times 1) + (4 \times 2) + (5 \times 4) = 31$). For purposes of counting number of games, the cited formula shall be used even for tournaments that have already occurred, regardless of the number of games that were played in those tournaments.

In a *suspension*, the suspended player shall attend and participate in all practices under the same terms of attendance as the rest of her team. She shall attend all games of her team, but shall not play in the attended game, shall not wear her uniform, and shall not sit in the dugout during the game for which she is suspended.

A player who has suffered *expulsion* from AGSA is permanently separated from AGSA for the current and all future seasons, and shall not participate in any AGSA activities nor play in any AGSA-sponsored games.

An *adult* who has been *suspended* shall be excluded from AGSA activities for the same durations as stated for players. For adults, this means that they shall not coach a team in any way nor enter the team dugout during any game for which the adult is suspended.

In an *adult expulsion*, the expelled adult is permanently separated from AGSA for the current and all future seasons, and shall not participate in any AGSA activities nor participate in any way in AGSA-sponsored games. It is beyond the power of AGSA to exclude adults from the public spaces in which AGSA pursues its activities; however, the intent of an expulsion of an adult is to distance the sanctioned adult as far from AGSA activities as possible.

Sanctions.

There are four levels of sanction, according to the severity of the misconduct. All sanctions described are minimum sanctions; the Executive Board may impose harsher punishments if, in its judgment by vote, the severity of a particular transgression calls for a harsher punishment.

Minor misconduct, first occurrence

Suspension level I

- the minimum period of suspension level I shall be two calendar weeks or ten games, whichever is less for the House Program and whichever is longer for the SAGE Program; the Executive Board may, at its option, impose a longer suspension
- the person will be stripped immediately of any leadership positions (e.g., team captaincy) for the balance of the season

- The loss of right to participate in games commences with the date of adjudication by the Executive Board, or with the date of adjudication by the appeal before the General Board, whichever is later
- unexcused missed practices and/or games will be added to the period of suspension
- If a suspension covers any part of a double-header or tournament, the suspension shall be in effect for the entire double-header or tournament
- If the suspension occurs late in the season such that the entire period of suspension cannot be completed in the current season, the Executive Board or General Board may, at its option, extend the remainder of the term of suspension into the following season

*Intermediate misconduct, first occurrence, or
Minor misconduct, second or third occurrence
Suspension level II.*

Minimum sanctions for *suspension level II* are similar to those for suspension level I, with the following differences:

- the minimum period of suspension level II shall be four calendar weeks or twenty games, whichever is less for the House Program and whichever is longer for the SAGE Program; the Executive Board may, at its option, impose a longer suspension
- the person shall be stripped immediately of any leadership positions (e.g., team captaincy), and shall not be eligible for such positions in future seasons

*Serious misconduct, first occurrence;
Intermediate misconduct, second or additional occurrence;
Minor misconduct, fourth or additional occurrence (suspension level III):*

Minimum sanctions for *suspension level III* are similar to those for suspension level II, with the following differences:

- the minimum period of suspension level II shall be eight calendar weeks or forty games, whichever is less for the House Program and whichever is longer for the SAGE Program; the Executive Board may, at its option, impose a longer suspension
- the person shall be stripped immediately of any leadership positions (e.g., team captaincy), and shall not be eligible for such positions in future seasons

*Severe misconduct, first occurrence;
Serious misconduct, second occurrence
Expulsion*

- The person shall be permanently expelled from AGSA and shall not be eligible to participate in any AGSA activity in perpetuity.

Persons subject to sanction under the terms of this policy shall not be offered a refund of fees paid to AGSA.

Consequences of sanctions.

The Ad Hoc committee on Code of Conduct and the Executive Board explicitly recognize that the imposition of a sanction on a team member or members may adversely affect that team's

ability to compete to its best ability in a contest, or may cause a team not to be able to compete in a contest at all. While such a turn of events is recognized to be unfortunate, the possibility of such effects on a team's competitiveness shall not be taken into account when assigning or enforcing sanctions.

5.8 Record-keeping requirements.

A record shall be prepared and maintained of behaviors and persons sanctioned by AGSA and of the terms of the applied sanctions. Names of persons accused but not found to have committed infractions will not be entered into the record. The Executive Board shall review the record of applied sanctions when deciding on sanctions for new incidents. The record of behaviors and of persons found to have committed infractions shall be held close, protected, and treated as confidential by the Executive Board.

The Executive Board is duty-bound to keep these records private. There are only two permissible uses of the records:

1. To examine the infraction and sanction record of an accused individual to determine whether previous offences by the individual have been recorded, and to report that history to the Board at the individual's hearing and appeal. In this case, both the individual's name and the list of that person's prior infractions shall be reported to the Board.
2. To determine the history of sanctions applied for similar infractions, and to present that history to the Board when it determines the sentence for an individual's infraction at the individual's hearing or appeal. In this case, only descriptions of violations and the sanctions imposed shall be reported to the Board; names of offenders shall not be reported.

5.9 Enforcement.

It shall be among the duties of all Executive Board members to ensure that the terms of the sanctions are observed in each case. Any AGSA member may bring to the attention of any voting member of the Executive Board the allegation that a violation of a sanction has occurred, that is, that a sanctioned player is not keeping to the terms of her sanction. The voting Executive Board member shall bring the allegation before the Executive Board within 48 hours of receiving the complaint. The Executive Board shall issue a ruling within 48 hours of having been notified. No individual member of AGSA, acting without expressed Executive Board approval, is authorized to impose a sanction.

6 EXCLUSION OF MUNDANE ISSUES

Nothing in this document shall be construed to limit the authority and responsibility of coaches to discipline their team members for issues that do not rise to the level of the violations described in the section *Classifications of Misconduct*. That is, ordinary, mundane team operations remain the purview of team coaches.

7 EXAMPLE CLASSIFICATIONS OF MISCONDUCT

The following table shows examples of prohibited behavior at four levels of severity. The table is not intended to be comprehensive, only illustrative. Absence of a behavior from this table

shall not be taken as permission to engage in that behavior. Other behaviors may be added to the table at any time by the AGSA Executive Board.

Example Classifications of Misconduct
Level I - Minor Misconduct (Sanction is Suspension Level I)
Inappropriate language or verbal provocation while under the influence of alcohol
Any of the following behaviors related to the consumption of alcohol: threats or acts of violence; avoidable fighting; disrespect of authority; destruction of property; illness, injury, loss of consciousness, or loss of bodily functions
Inappropriate language or gestures of a sexual nature not directed at an individual
Supporting or encouraging the use of inappropriate language of a sexual nature
Inappropriate language or gestures of a sexual nature directed at an individual
Inappropriate or derogatory language, not directed at an individual, that creates an atmosphere of intolerance for a person or class of persons
Support of inappropriate or derogatory language as described above
Failure to cooperate with AGSA officials
Failure to cooperate with coaches and game officials, e.g., umpires
Fighting in competition
Failure to treat AGSA staff in an appropriate manner
Verbal abuse of game officials, e.g., umpires
Intentionally defacing or destruction of property
Misrepresentation of events concerning an incident of misconduct
Failure to fulfill, or to cause another to fail to fulfill, a sanction imposed as a result of AGSA action for an infraction (escalates in parallel with the severity of the infraction)
Language or gestures that threaten another
Assault (subject to escalation according to the nature of the incident)
Participating in the premeditation to harm an individual or group
Behavior which has negative consequences for oneself, an AGSA-sponsored team, or AGSA (This clause is intended as a catch-all for infractions not listed elsewhere, until such infractions can become instantiated into the record; it escalates with the severity of the infraction)
Level II - Intermediate Misconduct (Sanction is Suspension Level II)
Underage possession or consumption of alcohol
Use of false identification to obtain alcohol
Making alcohol accessible to persons under 21 years of age
Sale of alcohol by a person under age 21 to one or more underage persons
Possession, sale, use, or distribution of tobacco in a manner banned by the laws of the State of Virginia
Possession or consumption of illegal drugs other than alcohol, including but not limited to marijuana and cocaine in any form
Use of prescription drugs for which the user does not have a prescription
Use of otherwise legal substances as intoxicants (e.g., sniffing solvents)
Threat or intent to harm an individual in a way that is perceived to be or is of a sexual nature
Unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature
Use of language that is abusive or threatening to an individual or group and is based on culture, race, age, gender, or sexual preference
Supporting or encouraging others to use language as described above
Intentionally targeting an individual for mistreatment due to culture, religion, race, age, gender, or sexual preference
Encouraging others to participate in acts of discrimination or malevolence
Threat or intent to harm an individual
Physical abuse of game officials, e.g., umpires
Level III - Serious Misconduct (Sanction is Suspension Level III)
Driving while intoxicated
Behavior related to the use of alcohol or other drugs or substances which threatens the welfare or functioning of others
Assault related to discrimination or malevolence
Defacing property in a manner that is discriminatory or malevolent
Threatening another's life when the threats are discriminatory
Participating in unwarranted acts that severely endanger an individual or group
Level IV - Severe Misconduct (Sanction is Expulsion)
Sale or distribution of alcohol by a person over age 21 to one or more underage persons
DUI or DWI while transporting AGSA persons (expected to be applicable almost entirely to adults; consequence is that the person will be forbidden to transport any AGSA personnel and will be excluded from all AGSA events.)
Sale or distribution of illegal drugs, prescription drugs, or substances to be used as intoxicants
Use, distribution, or sale of NCAA-banned substances (e.g., performance-enhancing drugs)
Persistent or repeated unwanted physical contact of a sexual nature
Rape, sodomy, or other sexual assault
Encouraging or supporting others to participate in sexual harassment or sexual assault