



# **YOUTH ATHLETIC HANDBOOK**

Athletic Offices

971 Tom Hall Street

Fort Mill, SC 29715



Greetings,

Welcome to the Town of Fort Mill Parks and Recreation Youth Sports Athletic Handbook. We are excited that you have decided to become a part of the Parks & Recreation family in Fort Mill. We are proud of our professional staff, volunteers, & youth sport athletes that participate in recreation sports throughout the different seasons that we offer sporting activities during the year. The following booklet will serve as a guide for any questions you might have about the registration process, team selection, player participation, volunteer coaches, emergency procedures, and other operational information for our youth athletics. We want this experience to be the best for your child and one that they will look back on as a memorable time in their life by meeting new friends, showing great sportsmanship, and having fun in a sporting environment.

Please let our staff know if you have any questions and once again welcome and we look forward to making sure your child's experience with recreation sports is fantastic.

Yours in Service,

*Brown Simpson Jr.*

**Brown Simpson Jr.**

Parks and Recreation Director

*Town of Fort Mill Parks and Recreation Department*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction 4	VIII. All-Stars 10
Purpose of Handbook 4	a. Age Divisions 10
FMPRD Mission Statement & Goals 4	b. Coach Selection 10
Standards for Youth Sports 4-5	C. Team Selection 10
II. Location and Info 5	d. Eligibility 10
III. Programs & Registration 5	e. Financial Support 10
a. Overview of Programs 5-6	IX. Safety and Emergency Planning 11
b. Registration Process 6-7	a. Sports Medicine Procedures 11-12
IV. Post Registration/Player Selection 7	b. Head Injuries/Concussions 12-13
a. Post Registration 7	c. Lightning Protocol 13-14
b. Coach Selection 7	X. Child Abuse 14
c. How are players are assigned 7	a. Types of Child Abuse 14
d. Evaluations 8	b. Prevent False Accusation 14
e. Draft Procedures 8	XI. Coaches 15
f. Draft Style 8	a. Coaches Role 15
g. Notification of Coach/Team 8	b. Background Screening 15-16
V. Practices 8	c. Coaching Multiple Teams 16
a. When They Start 8	d. Coaches Certification 16
b. Practice Times 8	e. Coaches Code of Ethics 16
c. How Often 8	f. Violations of the Code of Conduct/Ethics 17
d. Location 9	XII. Parents and Spectators 17
e. How Practices are Scheduled 9	a. Code of Ethics 17-18
f. Where are the Schedules Posted 9	b. Corrective Action 18
VI. Games 9	XIII. Participants 18
a. When They Start 9	a. Code of Conduct 18-19
b. Days of Play 9	b. Corrective Action 19
c. How Often 9	XIV. Administrator and Officials 19-20
d. How Many 9	a. Administrators Code of Ethics 20
e. Location 9	b. Officials Code of Ethics 20
f. Weather Cancelations 9	
VII. Awards and Trophies 10	

# I. Introduction

## **Purpose of this Handbook**

- Standardize the process of how Fort Mill Parks & Recreation Department (FMPRD) youth athletic programs are administered.
- Inform and educate how leagues are organized and conducted.
- Define expectations of all stake holders involved in sports programs from coaches, parents, players, and administrators.

## **FMPRD Mission Statement**

The Town of Fort Mill Parks and Recreation Department strives to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of our community by providing safe and well maintained parks as well as programs that are effective, progressive and promote a positive partnership with those we serve.

## **Goals of FMPRD's Youth Sports Programs**

- To offer every participant the opportunity to learn the fundamental skills associated with each sport.
- To emphasize the lifelong benefits of physical fitness and good sportsmanship, and to de-emphasize the importance of winning and losing.
- To ensure a safe and drug-free atmosphere for games and practices.
- To promote equal and fair treatment of every participant regardless of skill level, race, social-economic status, sex, creed, or physical ability.
- To ensure all staff, volunteer coaches, and officials are adequately trained.
- To provide a program that the citizens of the Town of Fort Mill will approve and support.

## **Standards of Youth Sports**

To aid in the implementation of policy and procedure to Fort Mill Parks & Recreation, we will be using the standards of youth sports set forth by the National Alliance for Youth Sports, an organization dedicated to educating, equipping and empowering youth sports leaders, volunteers, and parents so all children can enjoy the lifelong benefits of sports.

### National Standards for Youth Sports

1. Proper Sports Environment – Parents must consider and carefully choose the proper sports environment for their child, including the appropriate age and development for participation, the type of sport, the rules of the sport, the age range of the participants, and the proper level of physical and emotional stress.
2. Programs based on the Well-Being of Children – Parents must select youth sports programs that are developed and organized to enhance the emotional, physical, social, and educational well-being of children.
3. Drug, Tobacco, and Alcohol-Free Environment – Parents must encourage a drug, tobacco, and alcohol-free environment for their children.
4. Part of a Child's Life – Parents must recognize that youth sports are only a small part of a child's life.

5. Training – Parents must insist that coaches are trained and certified.
6. Parent’s Active Role – Parents must make a serious effort to take an active role in the youth sports experience of their child providing positive support as a spectator, coach, league administrator, and/or caring parent.
7. Positive Role Models- Parents must provide positive role models, exhibiting sportsmanlike behavior at games, practices and home, while also giving positive reinforcement to their child and support to their child’s coaches.
8. Parental Commitment- Parents must demonstrate their commitment to their child’s youth sports experience by annually signing the Parent’s Code of Ethics Pledge.
9. Safe Playing Situations- Parents must insist on safe playing facilities, healthful playing situations, and proper first aid applications, should the need arise.
10. Equal Play Opportunity- Parents, coaches, and league administrators must provide equal sports play opportunity for all youth regardless of race, creed, sex, economic status, or ability.

## II. Location and Information

The Fort Mill Parks and Recreation Athletic Department’s office is located at 971 Tom Hall St., Fort Mill, SC, inside the building of the YMCA at the Complex building. FMPRD office hours are Monday-Friday 8:30AM-5:00PM.

FMPRD uses 3 websites for its operational purposes

- **Quickscores- [Quickscores.com/fortmillsc](https://quickscores.com/fortmillsc)** This website is used primarily for all game information such as game schedules, practice schedules, game results, league standings, league coordinator contacts, game location & addresses, coach information and game cancelations.
- **Town website– [Fortmillsc.gov](https://fortmillsc.gov)** This website has a page dedicated to all information about the parks and recreation page, about each sport and the season we offer, and staff contacts. Also announcements from the department can be found on this page.
- **eTrac- <https://etrak-se1.com/etrak/cp?org=84>** This website is our registration and payment platform. Citizens can setup house hold accounts for their families. They will use this website to sign up for sports, summer camps, rentals and other services through the parks & recreation department. Direct links can be found on the previous two websites

## III. Programs & Registration

a. Programs offered by season (ages offered will be determined season by season. Age on the control date is child’s league age)

- **Fall Sports–** Registration typically runs June- Early August. Season runs August- Late October
  - Soccer- Ages 3-13. Control date December 31st of current year. Jersey, shorts, and socks provided
    - Ages 3-6 are instructional leagues. Jersey and socks provided
  - Baseball- Ages 7-12. Control date April 30th of following year. Jersey, hats, and socks provided
  - T-Ball/Slugger Ball– ages 3-6 instructional leagues. Jersey and hats provided
  - Softball- Ages 7-12. Control date December 31st of pervious year. Jersey and socks provided

*Fall Sports continued...*

- Flag Football- Ages 5-13. Control date September 1st of current year. Jersey and flag belt provided
- Winter Sports-Registration October—Early November. Season runs November-February
  - Basketball- Ages 5-18 Control date September 1st of current year. Jersey provided
- Spring Sports— Registration Early January— Early February. Season Runs February-May
  - Soccer- Ages 3-13. Control date December 31st of previous year. Jersey, shorts and socks provided
    - Ages 3-6 are instructional leagues. Jersey and socks provided
  - Baseball- Ages 7-12. Control date April 30th of the current year. Jersey, hats, and socks provided
  - T-Ball/Slugger ball— ages 3-6 instructional leagues. Control date April 30th of current year. Jersey and hats provided
  - Softball- Ages 7-12. Control date December 31st of pervious year. Jersey and Socks provided
  - Flag Football- Ages 5-13. Control date September 1st of previous year. Jersey and flag belt provided
  - Girls Volleyball Instructional Program— Ages 9-14 Control date September 1st of previous year. Jersey provided
  - Basketball— Ages 11-15. Control date Sept 1st of previous year. Jersey provided
- Seasonal Tennis Lessons
  - Tennis lessons are offered from March-October with a contracted Tennis Professional. Ages 5-18 are eligible for lessons. Sessions price varies from \$60-\$120 depending on the amount of lessons. FMPRD handles all registration for these lessons. The contracted tennis professional handles all curriculum and communications. No uniform or equipment is provided by FMPRD. Participants are expected to have a tennis racquet.

b. Registration Process

- On site registration- Registrants may come to our office located at the YMCA at the Complex in Fort Mill during registration periods to register. The office is open Monday-Friday 8:30AM-5:00PM
- Due to the availability of facilities, a maximum capacity may be placed on some leagues. If the capacity is met before the registration period has ended, potential registrants will be placed on a waitlist and may not be guaranteed a spot.
- Online Registration— Please visit our department page on [www.fortmillsc.gov](http://www.fortmillsc.gov) for a link to our online registration platform.
- Registration Fees— Fees for each program vary. Fees will be detailed in the registration information before every season. Fees typically range from \$70-\$115 depending on residency and sport.
- Non-Resident Fee— Registrants who live outside of York County must pay a non-resident fee (per sport, per child) of an additional \$20 per child.
- Forms of Payment— Cash, Credit/Debit Card (Visa or MasterCard), and/or Checks made payable to Fort Mill Parks and Recreation.

*Registration Process continued...*

- Late Registration/Waiting List- Those wishing to register after the deadline will be placed on the waiting list. If or when a roster spot opens up, players from the wait list will be contacted (in order) to come in and register. A late fee of \$10 will apply to late registrations not on waitlist before the end of the registration period.
- Age Divisions- Age divisions will be determined on a season-by-season basis and will be detailed on the registration information. Each program has its own birthday cutoff/age control date which determines a participants "league age" . Children are allowed to "play up" at the parent's request, as long as the child's current age is within one year of the league age minimum of the next division.
- Refunds- Request for refunds should be submitted by email to the league coordinator before the deadline. The deadline to receive a full 100% refund will be set each registration period and will typically be 15 days after registration has ended. After this period no refunds will be given
- Insurance- Insurance coverage is not provided with your registration fee.
- Medical Information- Please notify the Recreation office if your child has a pre-existing medical condition on the registration form in the notes section (i.e. previous surgeries, allergies, medications, physical impairments, etc.) Also notify the coach of the condition at the first team meeting.
- School Sports Participation- A participant may play in school and FMPRD programs. The participant will not be able to play in any all-star play governed by SCAP/SCRPA (football, soccer). Parents should take into account the schedules of practice and games, and also the fatigue that may be placed on the body.

## IV. Post Registration/Player Selection

- Post Registration**– Upon the completion of the registration period, registrants will receive a letter via email from our staff. This letter will contain information for the league such as equipment needed, league coordinator, skills evaluation dates and times, and information on when teams will be made.
- Coach Selection**– During this time we are looking for volunteer head coaches. Those interested in head coaching should select the option on the online registration form and also send an email to the coordinator for the league.
- How Players are Assigned to Teams/Coaches**- One of the many benefits of youth sports participation is meeting new people and making new friends. With the high number of registrants that participate in programs at FMPRD, it is impossible for every child to be placed on the same team as all of his/her friends, placed with a certain participant for transportation purpose, or to play for his/her coach of choice. Also to promote fairness and equal skilled teams we cannot guarantee team requests. In the younger age divisions (3– 6 year olds) only, we do try to accommodate the most requests. This process is utilized in the younger age divisions because those programs are designed for instruction and development. Scores and standings are not kept or emphasized, thus balancing rosters based upon talent is not as big of a concern. Instructional age teams are randomly assigned by our registration software to have similar amounts of boys and girls. For the older age divisions (7 – 18 years old), the even distribution of talent becomes more of a factor in creating a positive experience for participants, so it is more important for coaches to select players based on ability rather than other factors.

- d. **Evaluations-** Certain age divisions (7 and older) may conduct evaluations prior to the player draft. The purpose of evaluations is so coaches can get an idea of the skill level of all the players. Information on evaluations will be communicated prior to the end of registration. If a player misses evaluations, they will be randomly placed on a team at the end of the draft.
- e. **Draft Procedures (7 year olds and up)**
- Head Coaches' children will automatically be placed on his/her team or drafted the first round of the draft, depending on draft factors.
  - If a coach has an assistant coach or child they would like to "claim" before the draft they may do so by notifying the league coordinator and other coaches before evaluations.
  - The number of assistant coaches that can be "claimed" prior to evaluations is based on the sport/roster size
    - Flag Football, basketball- 1
    - Coach pitch baseball/softball- 4
    - 9-14 baseball/softball- 2
    - U9 soccer- 3, U11 soccer- 4, U14 soccer- 5
  - The coach has to take the assistant coaches' kids starting in the first/second round to hold the claim.
  - Once all draft eligible players that were at evaluations or frozen are chosen; the players that weren't at evaluations will be randomly assigned to teams keeping the order of the draft. The first one will go to the coach who had the next pick and so on.
  - After the coaches leave the draft the rosters are final.
- f. **Draft Style**
- Snake- All coaches will draw a number to determine the draft order for the first round. In round two the order is reversed. The order then reverses each round until all players have been drafted.
- g. **Notification of Coach/Team-** Coaches are instructed to contact all the players on his/her roster within 48 hours after the coaches' meeting/draft. If you have not heard from a coach by then, please contact the league coordinator FMPRD office.

## V. Practices

- a. **When They Start-** Practices may start a day or two after the coaches meeting/draft. Coaches will notify parents when the first practice is by phone or email
- b. **Practice times-** Practices are typically scheduled for weeknights anywhere between 6PM and 9PM, Saturdays between 8AM and 5PM, and Sundays between 1PM and 6PM. Practices typically last approximately one hour, depending on the sport and the age. Coaches select practice times based on availability in the coaches meeting.
- c. **How Often-** Typically a team will practice two to three times per week before games begin. Once games begin teams typically schedule one or two practices per week. Frequency of practices is left up to the discretion of



*Practices continued...*

- d. **Location**– Practices are held at various facilities around the Fort Mill area depending on the sport and age. Practices may be at a Town of Fort Mill facility or Fort Mill School District facility. The coach will notify.
- e. **How Practices are Scheduled**– During the coaches’ meeting/draft, coaches request practice dates, times, and locations. FMPRD staff will then generate a weekly practice schedule which assigns each team at least two practices.
- f. **Where are the Schedules Posted**– The coach is ultimately responsible for communicating the practice schedule with his/her team. The practice schedule may be posted on the league website, [quickscores.com/fortmillsc](http://quickscores.com/fortmillsc). Look under “Downloadable Files” or a link will be posted on the front page.

## VI. Games

- a. **When They Start**– Games usually begin two to three weeks after the coaches’ meeting/draft is held. The game schedule will be posted on [quickscores.com/fortmillsc](http://quickscores.com/fortmillsc).
- b. **Days of Play**– Due to the large number of participants in FMPRD’s programs, games may be scheduled on any day of the week except Sundays unless extreme circumstances. Game days vary in each sport and league. We make all efforts to keep the same 2-3 game days each week. Factors that affect the game schedule are availability of officials and facilities. FMPRD relies heavily on Fort Mill School District facilities. The availability of locations can change.
- c. **How Often**– Typically schedules will be generated giving teams 1-2 games per week. A team may also play three times per week if necessary in certain situations such as tournament play or make-ups.
- d. **How Many**– For instructional leagues (typically ages 6 and below), teams will be guaranteed six games on one of the days you registered for your child. For competitive leagues (typically ages 7 & up), teams are guaranteed 9 games. Our competitive league may also host an end of the season tournament. Depending on the size of the league, all teams may not make the tournament but may be given a consolation game.
- e. **Location**– Facilities used by FMPRD include town facilities and some Fort Mill School District gyms and fields. FMPRD staff may project locations for each program before registration begins. These projections are based on registration numbers from the previous year and are meant to give parents an idea as to where games will be held based upon the age division. Although every effort will be made to stick to the projections, several varying factors can change days/locations of each age division from year to year. So the projections are subject to change.
- f. **Weather Cancellations**– The decision whether or not to play games or practices due to weather will be made no sooner than 3:00 PM. As soon as a decision is made, an email will be sent out to coaches and parents, and the [Quickscores.com/fortmillsc](http://Quickscores.com/fortmillsc) website will be updated immediately. We ask that you please do not call FMPRD staff to inquire about field status. Instead, a call to the Weather Hotline can be made at 803-547-9043. If no announcement of cancellation, games and practices are still as scheduled. Every effort will be made to reschedule games that are canceled due to weather; however, in some cases the decision may be made not to make up games due to timing of the season. No refunds, partial refunds, or credits will be paid to participants due to a season shortened by inclement weather.

## VII. Awards & Trophies

- All participants in instructional leagues (usually ages 3-6), will receive medallions for their participation.
- In the competitive age leagues (usually ages 7 and above), tournament champions and runner-ups will be awarded medallions. If the league does not offer a post season tournament, then the regular season champion and runner-up will receive medallions.

## VIII. All –Stars

- Age Divisions-** All-Star teams may be selected in age divisions seven years and older. All-Star teams are offered in baseball and soccer( boys & girls).
- Coach Selection-** The All-Star head coach will be nominated and voted upon by the other coaches within the league. Any coach nominated must have a current NAYS coaches certification and a clean disciplinary report for the season. FMPRD staff must approve the selection. FMPRD may choose to select the All-Star coach without a coaches' vote, if we feel it 's in the best interest of the program. If a vote does occur and results in a tie, the ballot will be resent to all coaches with the two tied participants. If the second vote still results in a tie, FMPRD may choose the coach.
- Team Selection–** All regular season coaches will nominate a maximum of 4 kids from their teams who they feel are All-Star worthy. Those nominations may be invited to an All-Star evaluation conducted by the All-Star head coach. The All-Star head coach will then select all players for the team.
- Eligibility–** Players may be deemed ineligible for All-Stars for any of the following:
  - They are not a resident of the Town of Fort Mill
  - They did not participate in the minimum game requirement
  - They did not have a clean disciplinary report during the season, exhibited poor attitude or sportsmanship.
- Financial Support-** FMPRD will cover all tournament entry fees for competitions. FMPRD plays baseball under the Dixie Youth Baseball sanction and soccer under the South Carolina Recreation and Parks Association.
  - All-Star participants are responsible for all expenses related i.e., uniforms, travel, lodging, and meals
  - FMPRD will set up a vendor to order uniforms and help facilitate payments from parents to the vendor. Uniform cost can vary from \$30-\$60 depending on vendor and accessories for uniform agreed on by the team.

## IX. Safety and Emergency Planning

### A. Sports Medicine Policies and Procedures

#### ***Emergency Action Plan for Fort Mill Parks & Recreation Department***

Coach Information:

Whenever working with youth athletes, all head and assistant coaches are responsible for the following:

- knowing the location of the nearest emergency telephone
- having a first aid kit available (which is provided by FMPRD)
- knowing and implementing the proper emergencies procedures as detailed below :

The emergency plan of action for Fort Mill Parks & Recreation athletics uses the three American Red Cross First Aid steps listed below:

**CHECK:** First aid assessment to determine the necessity for assistance

**CALL:** If assistance is needed, determine if the injury is life threatening:

- For a non-life threatening injury- send a responsible person to notify the program director or site supervisor.
- For a life-threatening situation send a responsible person to call 911. Be sure the person knows the address and location of the injured athlete.

**CARE:** Remain with the injured athlete and provide appropriate first aid until EMS arrives to take over.

This will be reviewed with coaches at the preseason coaches meeting

#### **Injuries at Practices or Competitions:**

If the coach feels the injury is immediately life threatening, 911 should be called first.

The head coach will initiate the emergency plan if necessary, assisted by the assistant coach or responsible adult. The assistant coach or responsible adults near are responsible for maintaining order with the rest of the team and keeping them away from the injured person. The site supervisor assists as needed.

If transport to medical facility is needed, the head coach will send a responsible person to call 911. The head coach and/or player's guardian will remain in control of the student-athlete until EMS personnel arrive to take over.

#### **Most Injuries Fall into One of Three Categories**

1. Athlete needs transported to a hospital or medical facility – Call 911
  - Direct blow to the abdomen, which results in vomiting, severe pain, or signs of shock (rapid, weak pulse, drowsiness, shallow but rapid respirations, cool, clammy, and/ or pale skin)
  - A head injury with any loss of consciousness, vomiting, severe headache, slurred speech, tingling or numbness in both extremities, or is unable to communicate
  - Any severe bleeding that cannot be controlled in a few minutes with direct compression, elevation, and application of ice
  - An injury to an extremity that results in severe loss of function, circulation, or sensation

*Injury Categories continued...*

- Any obvious fracture or deformity of a major limb
- Athlete showing signs of distress or shock

2. Athlete should not continue and needs further care before returning

- An athlete has experienced a head injury
- Athlete is bleeding. May not continue until bleeding is fully stopped and others will not be at risk of exposure.

**Note:** *If large amount of blood is on uniform athlete cannot come back to play until uniform is thoroughly cleaned and sanitized or replaced*

- Athlete is favoring injured part in any way (i.e., limping) or has pain with activity
- The injury does not seem serious but the athlete does not want to or coach feels he/she should not continue.

3. Athlete can continue participating

- Injury is to an extremity and athlete is fully functional (i.e., no limping, can run, sprint, cut, hop and do a full squat all without pain)
- Athlete is not bleeding, and the wound dressed so that others are not at risk of exposure
- Athlete is in no other distress and wants to continue

Keep watching the athlete for signs of favoring the injured area or other indications that the injury is worse than first expected. When in doubt, always err on the side of safety. If there is any question remove the athlete from competition and guardian should take participant to primary care physician or medical facility.

**B. Head Injuries/Concussions**

If your child has suffered a head injury during athletic participation, he/she will need to rest and avoid any strenuous activity. Please **do not** give your child any medications unless directed to do so by a physician. The physician will need to know all the symptoms your child is experiencing to manage them properly.

The below symptoms are those that your child is/was experiencing. Please notate any symptoms and notify physician. **If these symptoms persist, worsen, or are compounded by other symptoms, please seek immediate medical attention.**

**Symptom Scale**

**None    Mild    Moderate    Severe**  
**0    1    2    3    4    5    6**

Headache	Drowsiness	Neck Pain
Nausea or vomiting	Pressure in head	Blurred vision
Balance problems	Dizziness	Sensitivity to noise
Feeling slowed down	Sensitivity to light	Don't feel right
Difficulty concentrating	Feeling like in a fog	Fatigue or low energy
Confusion	Difficulty remembering	Trouble falling asleep
More emotional	Irritability	Sadness
	Nervous or anxious	

### **Signs to Watch for**

Problems could arise over the first 24-48 hours.

Athlete should not be left alone and must go to a medical facility at once if they:

- Have a headache that gets worse
- Are very drowsy or can't be awakened (woken up)
- Can't recognize people or places
- Have repeated vomiting
- Behave unusually or seem confused; are very irritable
- Have seizures (arms and legs jerk uncontrollably)
- Have weak or numb arms or legs
- Are unsteady on their feet; have slurred speech

Remember, it is better to err on the side of safety.

### **Return to Play**

Athletes should not be returned to play the same day of injury. When returning athletes to play, they should follow a Stepwise Symptom-Limited Program, with stages of progression.

For example:

1. Rest until asymptomatic (physical and mental rest)
2. Light aerobic exercise (i.e., stationary cycle)
3. Sport-specific exercise
4. Non-contact training drills (light resistance training)
5. Full contact training after medical clearance
6. Return to competition (game play)

There should be approximately 24 hours (or longer) for each stage and the athlete should return to step one if symptoms re-occur.

### **C. Lightning Protocol**

*Summer is the peak season for one of the nation's deadliest weather phenomena— lightning. But don't be fooled, lightning strikes year round. In the United States, an average of 54 people are reported killed each year by lightning. Most of these tragedies can be avoided if proper precautions are taken. – National Weather Service*

### **LIGHTNING CAN STRIKE UP TO 25 MILES AWAY FROM A LIGHTNING CLOUD!!**

In an effort to continue to create the safest environment for our youth sports participants, volunteers, parents, and spectators, FMPRD trains staff and officials on the guidelines of *lightning safety*. FMPRD follows the lightning protocols of the National Federation of High Schools which states the following:

- *When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, the leading edge of the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Suspend play for at least 30 minutes and vacate the outdoor activity to the previously designated safer location immediately.*

- **30-Minute Rule.** Once play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
- Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count should begin.

### Safe Shelter

Athletes, Coaches, and spectators must be evacuated to a lightning-safe shelter. A lightning safe shelter has four walls, a floor and ceiling, and plumbing and/or wiring. Fully enclosed metal-topped vehicles can serve as safe shelter. During lightning delays, athletes and spectators should NOT be on fields, in dugouts, bleachers, or anywhere outside in the park. The only acceptable shelter is in a building or vehicle as described above.

## X. Child Abuse

If maltreatment of a child is reasonably suspected, a report should be made with Department of Social Services so that a qualified and experienced person can investigate the situation. If immediate assistance is required, call the Fort Mill Police Department dispatch at 803-547-2022, or if it is an emergency, call 911. Before filing a report, please inform the league coordinator of FMPRD of the situation.

There are four types of abuse to be aware of:

**Emotional**– This is a pattern of behavior that attacks a child’s emotional development and sense of self-worth. Examples include constant criticizing, belittling, insulting, rejection, and providing no love, guidance, and/or support. Emotional abuse is sometimes referred to as verbal abuse or mental abuse.

**Sexual**– This is the exploitation of a child for the sexual gratification of an adult. It may range from exhibitionism and fondling to intercourse or use of a child in the production of pornographic materials.

**Physical**– This is non-accidental physical injury which is inflicted by another person and may include severe beatings, burns, human bites, strangulation, or immersion in scalding water, with bruises, welts, broken bones, scars, or serious internal injuries.

**Neglect**– This is the withholding and/or failure to provide a child with the basic necessities of life (i.e., food, clothing, shelter, medical care, attention to hygiene, or supervision needed for optimal physical growth and development)

Tips to Prevent False Accusations:

- Avoid being alone with a child
- Stay within sight of others
- Respect privacy
- Avoid sexual jokes, comments, or gestures
- Set and respect boundaries

## XI. Coaches

- a. **Coaches Role-** Volunteer coaches play a pivotal role in our mission and the success of our department. Coaches are to understand their role is to be taken serious and view themselves as volunteer employees of Fort Mill Parks and Recreation Department. Emphasis shall be placed on choosing the most qualified coaches that not only display a good knowledge of the sport but also display good characteristics outside of sport. Characteristics include the following:
- Integrity— a good coach should respect and understand the need for rules. He/she should never attempt to circumvent the rules in any way.
  - Enthusiasm—adding emotion to effort. A good coach must show enthusiasm in order to encourage and excite his/her players.
  - Patience— A good coach should not push children beyond their limits in terms of practice. Coaches should create an environment of learning and fun, not one of stress and negativity.
  - Sportsmanship— Set the example. All the kids on your team and their parents are watching how you react to a bad call or treat the other team’s coaches, players, and fans. Show them that you win and lose with class and respect.
  - Perspective— Understand that there are far more important things in life than losing a game in youth sports. Everyone should want to do well and everyone should want to win, but losing a game is not the end of the world. A youth sports coach’s success is measured by the respect he/she gains from players, parents, and officials – not wins and losses.
  - Positive Attitude— A coach should encourage his/her players. Avoid negative remarks towards players and officials. Creating a positive environment during games and practices will be more enjoyable for all involved.
  - Preparation— Have an organized plan for practices. Be familiar with the rules of the game and the policies of the league.
  - Communication— Be accessible to parents. Keep them in the loop with plans and schedules. Setting up an email distribution list with all the parents on your roster is a great way to keep good lines of communication.
  - Concern for Safety— A coach should always consider the safety and welfare of his/her players above anything else. If there is a safety concern you need assistance with, contact your league coordinator immediately.
- b. **Background Screenings—** Fort Mill Parks & Recreation Department has the responsibility to protect the well-being and safety of all participants. As an extension of its on-going efforts to support this initiative, the Town of Fort Mill Parks & Recreation Department has created a strategy to ensure that every volunteer meets a minimum standard that would provide participants with a safe environment. FMPRD has adopted a mandatory background screening policy for volunteers. In order to volunteer with FMPRD programs, individuals must complete an application with our background screening vendor. At the cost to FMPRD, all volunteer applications will be screened nationally by AEGIS Security and Investigations. The purpose of the policy is to identify individuals with a criminal background.

Application Disqualifiers

- Any Felony Conviction within 10 years
- Any Sexual Related Crime
- Any Drug Conviction within the last five years or multiple convictions within 10 years
- Two or more DUI Convictions within the last five years
- Any Misdemeanor Violence within seven years
- Falsifying Application
- Any Misdemeanor Contributing to the Delinquency of a Minor

Appeal Process (In Case of a Disqualified Applicant)

If the applicant disputes the finding of the background check, they can appeal to FMPRD where they may receive a copy of their background check. All information contained in the application and the findings are held in confidence. Information is not shared with outside organizations or individuals.

- c. **Coaching Multiple Teams-** We do allow coaches to be the head coach for more than one team per season. We do not encourage this as we can not guarantee all the schedules will be worked out. We encourage coaches that do coach multiple teams to be sure to have assistant coaches.
- d. **Coaches Certification-** FMPRD requires that all volunteers who want to coach youth sports must complete and maintain certification through the National Alliance for Youth Sports Coach Training & Membership Program. This is required in an effort to properly educate and prepare coaches for the responsibilities associated with working with children in a youth sports environment. This certification trains coaches on the philosophy of youth sports, injury prevention, practice organization, game rules, dealing with common issues, and much more. The cost of the certification is \$20 per coach, per year, and is paid for by FMPRD. Once a coach has been selected and approved to coach, he/she will be emailed instructions on how to go online and go through the training. For more information visit NAYS.org.
- e. **Coaches Code of Ethics-** As part of the NAYS Coach's Training and Certification, coaches will pledge to abide by the following Code of Ethics:
  - I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
  - I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
  - I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
  - I promise to review and practice basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
  - I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players.
  - I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
  - I will not cheat or engage in any form of unethical behavior that violates league rules.
  - I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
  - I will be knowledgeable in the rules of each sport that I coach and I will teach these rules to my players.
  - I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for all of the skills that I teach.
  - I will remember that I am a youth sports coach and that the game is for children and not adults.



#### f. Violations of the Code of Conduct/Ethics

- Possible Actions Include:
  - Warning to the coach accompanied by apology from the coach
  - Probation
  - One Game Suspension
  - Multiple Game Suspension
  - Season Suspension
  - Permanent Revocation of Certification, thus inability to continue as FMPRD coach
- Factors that might suggest a more lenient sanction include:
  - First offense
  - Remorse
  - Apparent desire to reform
  - Other good coaching attributes
  - History of dedication to youth sports
- Factors that might suggest a harsher sanction include:
  - Child endangerment
  - Violation of law
  - Prior violations
  - Lack of remorse
  - Number of Expected Behaviors violated
  - Breach of duties as a role model
  - Extraordinarily poor judgment around children
  - Lying or not being forthcoming

## XII. Parents and Spectators

### Code of Ethics

In order for a program to be truly successful, it takes the cooperation of players, coaches, officials, league administrators, spectators, and especially parents. Parents and spectators are expected to read, understand, and abide by the following Code of Ethics provided by the National Alliance for Youth Sports:

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports events.
- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my child ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
- I will require that my child's coach be trained in the responsibilities of being a youth sports coach and that the coach upholds the Coaches' Code of Ethics.

*Parents Code of Ethics continued...*

- I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I will remember that the game is for youth, not for adults.
- I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.
- I will help my child enjoy the youth sports experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectful fan, assisting with coaching, or providing transportation.
- I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.

**Corrective Action**

Parents who do not follow the above Code of Ethics will be subject to corrective action. It is the philosophy of FMPRD that parents should not spoil the experience of participation in youth sports for the children. The following guidelines have been established for addressing problems with parents/spectators. **Note:** *These guidelines are not absolute in dealing with behavioral problems. Severe situations could warrant harsher sanctions.*

Step 1– Verbal Warning– League administrator and/or coach will discuss the undesirable conduct with parents and stress that this behavior will not be tolerated. Coach will document this conversation and submit to FMPRD.

Step 2– Written Warning– League administrator, coach, or official will notify FMPRD of continued breach of Code of Ethics and FMPRD will arrange a meeting with the parents. A formal letter of reprimand will be given to the parent stating that the next offense could lead to a suspension or ban.

Step 3– Game Suspension– A letter of suspension will be drafted by FMPRD staff explaining that the parent will be banned from attending the teams next scheduled contest. The next offense could result in a season-long suspension.

Step 4– Season Long Suspension– The parent will be banned from attending any future league contests. The parent’s child may also be removed from the program for the remainder of the season.

## XIII. Participants

In order for a program to be truly successful it takes the cooperation of players, coaches, officials, league administrators, spectators, and especially parents. Participants are expected to read, understand, and abide by the following Code of Ethics provided by the National Alliance for Youth Sports:

- I will demonstrate and encourage good sportsmanship to fellow players, coaches, officials, and parents at every game and practice.
- I will attend every practice and game that I can and will notify my coach if I cannot attend.
- I will expect to receive a fair and just amount of playing time.
- I will do my very best to listen and learn from my coaches.

*Participant code of ethics continued...*

- I will treat my coaches, other players, officials, and fans with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or abilities and will expect to be treated accordingly
- I deserve to play in an environment that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and expect adults to refrain from their use at all youth sports events.
- I deserve to have fun during my sports experience and will alert parents or coaches if it stops being fun.
- I will encourage my parents to be involved with my team in some capacity because it is important to me.

### **Corrective Action**

Participants who fail to adhere to the Code of Conduct may be subject to disciplinary action. Therefore FMPRD has instituted a Corrective Action Policy to establish appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior. **Note:** These guidelines are not absolute in dealing with behavioral problems. Severe situations could warrant harsher sanctions.

Step 1– Verbal Warning– Coach will discuss inappropriate conduct with the player and parents and emphasize that this behavior will not be tolerated. Coach will document this discussion and provide a copy to FMPRD.

Step 2– Period Suspension– Coach will bench the offending player for a period of time during a game when he/she should be playing. Coach will inform FMPRD of the problem and why the child is sitting out.

Step 3– Game Suspension– Coach will bench the offending player for one entire game when he/she should be playing. Coach will inform FMPRD of the 3rd offense, at which time the player and the parent must attend a meeting with the coach and a FMPRD representative before the player is allowed to resume playing. The player will be warned that the next offense could result in his/her expulsion from the league.

Step 4– League Expulsion– The participant on the 4th offense may be expelled from the league and no refund will be given. The parent will need to make a formal request to be re-instated into this league.

## **XIV. League Administrators and Officials**

Fort Mill Parks and Recreation is dedicated to raising community standards in youth sports. In order to do so, we must hold ourselves accountable by staying abreast on current topics and trends in the recreation industry. Training administrators and officials is essential in maintaining a level of professionalism and credibility in youth sports. Administrators and officials are expected to understand and pledge to abide by the following Code of Ethics provided by the National Alliance for Youth Sports:

### **Administrators Code of Ethics**

I hereby pledge to provide support to all youth sports programs in my community, to administer youth sports programs with professionalism and in the best interest of the children involved by following the Youth Sports Administrators' Code of Ethics:

- I will run youth sports programs for the children involved, not the adults.

*Administrators Code of Ethics continued...*

- I will ensure that I am knowledgeable in the area of youth sports administration.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for all participants.
- I will provide support for coaches, officials, and parents to provide a positive, enjoyable experience for all.
- I will require all coaches to be trained in the responsibilities of being a volunteer within the organization and that they uphold the NAYS Codes of Ethics.
- I will implement and enforce the National Standards for Youth Sports.
- I promise to stay informed about current issues involving youth sports.

**Officials Code of Ethics**

- I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support of all players, coaches, fellow officials, and league administrators at all times.
- I will ensure that I am knowledgeable of the rules of each sport I officiate and apply those rules fairly to all participants, teams, and coaches.
- I will not allow personal friendships and associations to influence my decisions during a contest.
- I will refrain from the use of tobacco and alcohol products when in the youth sports environment.
- I will remember that youth sports are an opportunity for children to learn and have fun.
- I will place the safety of the participants above all else.