



BCYA Youth Protection Policy

BCYA is committed to providing minors with the highest quality programs available and to creating an environment for minors that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and promotes growth and success. No form of abuse or neglect will be tolerated and confirmed abuse or neglect will result in dismissal. All observations or reports of suspicious or inappropriate behavior or of abuse or neglect must be reported to a commissioner or Board member and will be taken seriously. BCYA will fully cooperate with law enforcement authorities if allegations of abuse or neglect require criminal investigation.

Purpose: The BCYA Youth Protection Policy establishes policies, standards, and procedures for preventing abuse in BCYA programs providing services to minors.

Scope: This policy applies to all BCYA programs and volunteers. Parents or guardians are to provide supervision over minors unless they are involved in a BCYA program.

Definitions:

BCYA program: any: (1) sporting opportunity organized by BCYA; (2) that includes minors; and (3) during which parents or guardians are not expected to be responsible for the care, custody, or control of the minor (note that end-of-season events or other special activities such as parades would not be a BCYA program and therefore parents and guardians would be expected to be responsible for the care, custody, or control of the minor).

Board member: the elected participants on the board of directors of BCYA

Care, custody, or control: when an adult(s) is present and has primary responsibility for supervision of minors at any given point throughout the BCYA program. At least one adult must have care, custody, or control of minors at all times during the BCYA program.

Child abuse or neglect: when a child has suffered or faces a substantial threat of suffering any physical or mental wound, injury, disability, or condition that reasonably indicates abuse or neglect, including any conduct of a sexual nature that may be harmful to a minor's mental, emotional, or physical welfare.

Commissioner: the designated individual charged with the administrative and organizational oversight of a given BCYA program

Minor: any individual under the age of 18 or any individual under 21 years old incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability who is a participant in a BCYA program

Volunteer: any individual working in an unpaid capacity in a BCYA program, which includes coaches of all levels and Board members

Summary of Policy Requirements:

The following requirements are an overview only and are detailed in the Procedure section.

- I. Those volunteering in BCYA programs who witness child abuse or neglect or misconduct or have information that would lead a reasonable person to believe a minor faces a substantial threat of such abuse, neglect, or misconduct, must follow specific reporting procedures.

- II. Volunteers must be background checked before volunteering in BCYA programs.
- III. All volunteers must sign and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct for Volunteers before volunteering in BCYA programs.

Procedures:

- I. Reporting known or suspected abuse or misconduct
 - A. Any volunteers who in the course of their duties witness child abuse or neglect or have information that would lead a reasonable person to believe a minor faces a substantial threat of child abuse or neglect must immediately take the following steps to report:
 - 1. Alert the appropriate agency:
 - a. If a minor is in imminent danger (life threatening or abuse is being witnessed), call 911. If you are unsure whether there is imminent danger, call 911.
OR
 - b. If a minor is not in imminent danger, call Children Services Agency at 855-O-H-CHILD (855-642-4453), which is a 24-hour automated telephone directory that will link callers directly to a child welfare or law enforcement office in their county.
 - B. Any volunteers who in the course of their duties witness violations of the Code of Conduct for Volunteers or other inappropriate interactions or have information that would lead a reasonable person to believe that inappropriate interactions may have occurred, must immediately notify the BCYA program commissioner or Board member.
 - C. Parents and guardians can play a crucial role in detecting inappropriate interactions, violations of standards, and incidents of abuse. To ensure that parents and guardians have the information necessary to do so, all BCYA Youth Protection policy components will be publicly available on BCYA's website and communicated properly.
- II. Background checks
 - A. Volunteers who are likely to be responsible for the care, custody, or control of minors must have a background check completed before volunteering in a BCYA program. The background check must include a National Sex Offender Registry check.
 - B. Volunteers required to be background checked who have a break in service for less than 12 months must disclose any convictions that occurred during the break within three business days of commencement of participation in BCYA programs. If a break in service is longer than 12 months, individuals required to be background checked must have a new background check before volunteering in BCYA programs.
 - C. All volunteers must be background checked no longer than every two years.
- III. Code of Conduct for Volunteers
 - A. All volunteers are required to sign and abide by the Code of Conduct for Volunteers. The purpose of this Code is to promote the safety and wellbeing of all minors.
 - B. The Code of Conduct for Volunteers shall be signed before volunteering in each BCYA program.

Code of Conduct for Volunteers

As a BCYA volunteer, we hold the following expectations:

- Our volunteers will exhibit the highest ethical best practices and personal integrity.
- Our volunteers will provide a professional environment that is free from physical, psychological, written, or verbal intimidation or harassment.
- Our volunteers will not physically, sexually, or emotionally abuse or neglect a minor or adult.
- Our volunteers will share concerns about suspicious or inappropriate behavior with their commissioner or a Board member.
- Our volunteers will report any suspected abuse or neglect of a minor to the state authorities.
- Our volunteers will accept their personal responsibility to protect minors and adults from all forms of abuse.

Code of Conduct for Volunteers

The following expectations are intended to assist volunteers in making decisions about interactions with minors. Unless otherwise noted, BCYA is referred to as the “organization.” For clarification of any guideline, or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact your commissioner or a Board member.

BCYA provides minors with the highest quality services available. We are committed to creating an environment for minors that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and that promotes growth and success.

Abuse of any kind will not be tolerated, and confirmed abuse will result in immediate dismissal from this organization. BCYA will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made that require an investigation.

The Conduct with Minors outlines specific expectations of volunteers as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

1. Minors will be treated with respect at all times.
2. Minors will be treated fairly regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, age, gender, or religious preference.
3. Volunteers will avoid affection with minors that cannot be observed by others.
4. Volunteers will adhere to appropriate verbal interactions.

5. Volunteers will not stare at or comment on minors' bodies.
6. Volunteers will not date or become romantically involved with minors.
7. Volunteers will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of minors.
8. Volunteers will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography, on our organization's property.
9. Volunteers will not have secrets with minors and will not give gifts to individual minors (gift-giving to an entire team is acceptable).
10. Volunteers will not interact with minors in a BCYA capacity outside of BCYA programs.
11. Volunteers will not participate in electronic communication and social media with minors. All communications must be sent directly to parents and guardians.
12. Volunteers will not interact one-on-one with minors in a private setting.
13. Employees and volunteers will not abuse minors in any way including (but not limited to) the following:
 - a. *Physical abuse*: hitting, spanking, shaking, slapping, unnecessary restraints
 - b. *Verbal abuse*: degrading, threatening, cursing
 - c. *Sexual abuse*: inappropriate touch, exposing oneself, sexually-oriented conversations
 - d. *Mental abuse*: shaming, humiliation, cruelty
 - e. *Neglect*: withholding food, water, shelter
14. The organization will not tolerate the mistreatment or abuse of one minor by another minor. In addition, our organization will not tolerate any behavior that is classified under the definition of bullying, and to the extent that such actions are disruptive, we will take steps needed to eliminate such behavior. Anyone who sees an act of bullying, and who then encourages it, is engaging in bullying. This policy applies to all minors and volunteers.

Bullying is aggressive behavior that is intentional, is repeated over time, and involves an imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can take on various forms, including:

- a. *Physical bullying*: when one person engages in physical force against another person, such as by hitting, punching, pushing, kicking, pinching, or restraining another.
- b. *Verbal bullying*: when someone uses their words to hurt another, such as by belittling or calling another hurtful names.
- c. *Nonverbal or relational bullying*: when one person manipulates a relationship or desired relationship to harm another person. This includes social exclusion, friendship manipulation, or gossip. This type of bullying also includes intimidating another person by using gestures.
- d. *Cyberbullying*: the intentional and overt act of aggression toward another person by way of any technological tool, such as email, instant messages, text messages, digital pictures or images, or website postings (including blogs).

Cyberbullying can involve:

- 1. Sending mean, vulgar, or threatening messages or images;
 - 2. Posting sensitive, private information about another person;
 - 3. Pretending to be someone else in order to make that person look bad;
 - 4. Intentionally excluding someone from an online group.
- f. *Hazing*: an activity expected of someone joining or participating in a group that humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers that person regardless of that person's willingness to participate.
 - g. *Sexualized bullying*: when bullying involves behaviors that are sexual in nature. Examples of sexualized bullying behaviors include sexting, bullying that involves exposures of private body parts, and verbal bullying involving sexualized language or innuendos.

- 15. Volunteers will report concerns or complaints about other volunteers, other adults, or minors to a commissioner or Board member immediately.
- 16. Volunteers will report allegations or incidents of abuse to the proper state authority. In Ohio, this means making a call to the local police and/or sheriff. Please see BCYA Youth Protection Policy for more information.
- 17. Volunteers may not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of abuse of a minor, indecency with a minor, or injury to a minor.
- 18. All volunteers will be background checked before volunteering in a BCYA program and regularly thereafter. Please see BCYA Youth Protection Policy for more information.

19. Volunteers required to be background checked who have a break in service for less than 12 months must disclose any convictions that occurred during the break within three business days of commencement of participation in BCYA programs. Please see BCYA Youth Protection Policy for more information.