**NEW SCOTLAND SOCCER CLUB, INC. (NSSC)**

**GUIDANCE REGARDING THE CODES OF CONDUCT AND ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

This document is not meant to replace or modify the CDYSL “Codes of Conduct”, “Anti-Bullying Policy” and “Zero Tolerance Policy”. Clubs participating within the CDYSL agree to abide by these policies, as do individual coaches and officers. The CDYSL policies address the behavior of coaches, club officials, referees, players, parents and spectators. Overall, the policies are intended to ensure all participants in CDYSL soccer can have a positive experience.

NSSC applies these policies to the soccer field, sidelines and surrounding areas including parking lots. They apply before, during, and after games and practices.

By developing this guidance document, NSSC hopes to support the goals of the CDYSL codes and policies through the following efforts:

* Ensure all participants in NSSC are aware of the codes and policies,
* Provide guidance to coaches on how to handle possible violations of the codes, and
* Describe how the Club will support those NSSC participants who are involved in a possible incident.

Awareness

All NSSC **Officers** must be familiar with the CDYSL codes and policies. The League Representative, or whichever Officer attends CDYSL meetings, must keep apprised of any changes to the documents. These changes must be communicated to the remaining Officers. Prior to the Spring Coaches Meeting, the NSSC League Representative will contact CDYSL to confirm the most current versions and that the club has access to them.

All **Coaches** (head and assistant) will be provided with copies of the CDYSL codes and policies upon assignment to a team. Coaches must review the documents. As the connection to the parents and players, coaches are critical to effectively communicating the goals of the policies. At the club’s pre-season coaches meeting(s), NSSC Officers will review the policies with coaches.

As appropriate for the players’ ages, Coaches must communicate the codes of conduct and zero tolerance policies to **players**. Verbal discussion of the underlying goals is appropriate with U12 and younger teams, while older teams should also be provided with copies of the documents. A pre-season team meeting or first practice is a good time to discuss the policies, and how they apply to the players. Players should know that the policies are in place to help ensure they can practice and play soccer in a friendly environment. Coaches are encouraged to review the codes and policies a second time during the season.

Coaches must also communicate the goals of the code and policies to **parents**. The link to the CDYSL site must be included in one of the early e-mails to parents, and copies can be handed out at a pre-season parents meeting. Parents should be made aware of the potential impacts on the team and NSSC if the parent’s behavior strays from the permissible standards. In addition, parents can be a significant partner for coaches when it comes to the players understanding the policies, especially with younger players. Coaches should encourage parents to have a positive effect on the behavior of other spectators on the sidelines.

Handling Incidents

CDYSL has Zero Tolerance Procedures and an online report form . They are intended for reporting violations of the Zero Tolerance policy to CDYSL, and assume the incident happens at a game. NSSC wants coaches and officers to be prepared to deal with violations which occur at practices or elsewhere. Coaches and officers should keep in mind that the policies apply to all participants including coaches, players, parents, spectators and officials. Incidents can take many forms. The following suggestions are provided to help deal with an incident, but coaches should use their judgment based on the situation.

Coaches should do what they can to defuse a confrontational situation. The first priority and responsibility for coaches are the players. Players need the coaches to ensure the environment is safe and comfortable. Any players involved in the incident should be removed from the situation and given a chance to calm down. The entire team should be monitored. If possible the coach should explain what happened. This explanation could be brief during the game or practice, and then a longer explanation can follow.

Coaches can turn to a parent for help if the parent’s child is involved in the situation. After the incident, coaches can turn to parents in general to gather more information about what happened. At the same time, coaches may be expected to deal with a parent in a proactive manner to avoid an incident, or after an incident has occurred. Referees may look to the coach to deal with parents of their players and guests. Coaches should remind parents that their actions can have negative impacts on players from both teams, parents and other spectators, the referee, and ultimately on the NSSC.

If the incident occurs during a game, the coach will support the referee’s decision. After the game, a coach should try to obtain additional information and request the referee to file a formal report if the coach deems necessary. If possible, coaches should also touch base with the opposing coach(es).

Finally, the NSSC President or another Officer must be informed of the occurrence, whether an incident report is filed or not. As the situation develops, coaches may need to update parents and players, especially if penalties are applied.

Club Support and Participant Responsibilities

NSSC officers will assist coaches with outreach to team parents if desired following an incident. If the incident is reported to CDYSL, the club will work with the coach to file the required information. While CDYSL is not required to share information about their investigation into an incident, the club will try to obtain information on the status and ultimate resolution of the investigation. As allowed, this information will be shared with the coach.

NSSC understands that dealing with incidents covered by the zero tolerance policies will probably be unpleasant and difficult. The club supports efforts to enforce the policies and will make that clear to those involved. In addition, since CDYSL finding a violation could result in administrative and/or financial penalties against the club, the officers will treat incidents seriously. The first concern will always be the safe, sporting, appropriate atmosphere for players. Officers may also try to protect the club from financial harm.

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