

# Welcome to Prodigy Volleyball Academy

## Mission

The Mission of Prodigy Volleyball is to use the sport of volleyball as a vehicle for teaching young athletes how to maximize their potential both on and off the court. We seek to develop their skills with top-notch instruction, giving them the potential for immediate and future success in the sport. We also seek to mentor and provide an environment that teaches the life lessons that are learned through sports and competition.

Our Goal is to run the best Volleyball Program in the Country. Not measured by wins and losses but measured by developing our young athletes' character: their work ethic, their ability to sacrifice, their dedication, perseverance, and commitment to their team and to themselves. We strive to instill in them this "Growth Mindset" by giving them the essential life skills so they can move towards being positive, successful, and responsible young adults.

### **"Success Begins with a Positive Attitude"**

Prodigy Volleyball Academy (PVA) is establishing itself as a volleyball program that will be recognized as one of the finest youth programs in the country. We demand a positive commitment from coaches, players, and parents is required.

Our coaching staff must be committed to having up to date knowledge to teach the fundamentals of the game and the ability to motivate our players to their maximum level of performance. They must have patience and, above all, the ability to communicate with

positive reinforcement and to assist each player in any way possible to achieve the goals established by that player.

Our players must be committed to the program as established by the coaching staff, to practice and play with competitive attitudes, and to always maintain good sportsmanship. Finally, our parents must be committed to the program as established by the coaching staff and should always maintain a positive attitude toward the program.

Parents must eliminate their own ego from the process and see the game without parental eyes. Parents should become knowledgeable of the game to understand how it is played and appreciate the efforts of ALL of the players. It is extremely important to the maintenance of our program and to the accomplishment of our goals that coaches, players, and parents maintain a positive attitude. So much can be accomplished if we believe in and are committed to the same system.

### **GOALS:**

- To develop interest and encourage participation in the sport of volleyball for girls and boys 6 years old through high school seniors and beyond.
- To provide players with the most advanced training.
- To encourage and help players pursue higher education by providing maximum exposure to collegiate volleyball programs.
- To be recognized as the finest youth volleyball program in the nation.

### **PVA Management Team:**

Diane Swertfager

Maribeth Powers

Dan Papes

Chai Suh

Stacey Pittman

Bill Swertfager

### **GENERAL POLICIES:**

At PVA, we expect our players to act in a courteous manner throughout the season. Players disobeying either club or USAV rules or acting in a manner deemed inappropriate by the staff, may be disciplined, or expelled from PVA. If expulsion from the program is required, there will be no financial reimbursement, and remaining club fees will still be due.

Any member found to be in the possession of alcohol, tobacco, vaping, or illegal drugs may be immediately expelled from the program. Any member determined to be stealing or bullying may also be immediately expelled from the program.

To promote team and program unity, all players are required to wear the assigned practice uniforms at all practices and full game uniforms at all tournaments. Team uniforms do not include jewelry, wristbands, or headbands. Pants or shorts are to be worn over spandex outside of the gym.

PVA does not permit players to be released to other clubs.

### **GENERAL PRACTICE POLICIES:**

Please be on time for practice. Transportation to all practices and competition is the responsibility of the players and their parents. We have limited gym space and to avoid another team's practice starting late or your practice running short, every player must be dressed, warmed up, and ready to begin at the practice time listed.

All players are required to wear PVA practice apparel to practice. If your team has more than one color shirt, make sure that everyone knows which color to wear on which practice days. Each team is required to wear the same practice t-shirt at practice.

Players that forget their practice shirt will be required to buy a new practice shirt.

Players must call their coach at least one hour before practice if they will not be in attendance. Players who miss practice are missing valuable information and training time and, potentially, may have their playing time decreased. To emphasize player responsibility, we do not want parents to call on behalf of their child (except for the 10 and under parents/players).

### **CLOSED PRACTICE POLICY:**

The club maintains a policy of practices being closed to parents, regardless of age. We believe that this creates a much more professional and positive learning environment for your child as well as reduce the inevitable negative comments which ultimately come from some parents.

Our coaches also prefer closed practices. It is a significant time commitment for coaches to give up 5-7 months of their year and the

most common reason that coaches don't coach club volleyball is due to interference from parents. This, in turn, demoralizes coaches.

We have therefore found that coaches are more productive in a closed practice environment.

We also believe that most players learn more, and perform better, without the constant influence of parents.

We have attempted to make each of our facilities comfortable and equip them with Wi-Fi, cable TV and other amenities for your pleasure.

The closed practice policy is subject to change but applies to weekly practices. It does not apply to our scrimmages in which parents are welcome. Parents are open to watch all youth programs (elementary age)

## **CLUB RELEASE POLICY**

PVA's policy regarding releases is to not permit releases. We maintain this policy because releases often negatively impact the remaining girls on the team and are requested when we can no longer replace or add comparable players. Any decision regarding a release is determined at the sole and absolute discretion of the club and is rarely granted.

A change in geographical location of the family due to a change in job, military, scholastic, or inner-collegiate status may receive special consideration.

No player may participate in different USAV Qualifying events with different clubs/teams. Once an athlete has participated in a National

Qualifier Event, they become ineligible to participate in either a National Qualifier Event or the USAV Girls Junior National Championship event with another club.

### **TOURNAMENT POLICIES:**

- Every player will be offered training during practices. Playing time, however, is determined at the discretion of the PVA coaching staff and is based on a variety of factors, including but not limited to, a lineup for each competition that will lead to success on the court.
- All players are required to wear PVA issued apparel upon entering and leaving the gym.
- Food and beverage rules must be strictly adhered to. The GEVA Region rules allow a tournament director to penalize teams if parents and/or supporters ignore this rule.
- All players are expected to attend every tournament, including the Nationals, if qualified in June/July.
- If a player cannot be at a tournament, she must inform the coach as soon as she knows she will be absent so that the coach can make appropriate changes to practices or lineups. It is the player's (not the parent's) responsibility to make arrangements with the coach.
- Players may not leave a tournament site until excused by the coach.
- Tape for Players at Tournaments: If your player needs to be taped during a tournament, please note you will need to provide your own pre-wrap and tape. It will also generally be available at tournaments for \$5 a roll.

- Phones (at curfew) – This policy applies only to players 15-18 that may be rooming together. Our coaches will collect phones from players rooming together and return them in the morning. The purpose of this policy is so that players immediately go to sleep which they will otherwise not do if they are permitted to keep their phones. Therefore, there are two important things for parents to know:

- o First, we will generally collect the phones around 9 to 9:30pm (unless it is a PM wave) so you need to make sure to contact your daughter prior to that time if you need to speak with her. In the event of an emergency, you can always contact the coach.

- o Second, we have instructed all girls to put a notecard of emergency phone numbers on a card and always leave it in their backpacks. The emergency phone numbers should include your own number, their coaches and anyone else you think is important. Therefore, in the event of an emergency, they can use the hotel phone to contact you or their coaches. **WE ARE ASKING YOU TO PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOUR DAUGHTER FOLLOWS THIS POLICY AND HAS SUCH A LIST IN HER BACKPACK.**

- Rooming Policy – We encourage players 15-18 to room together to build camaraderie, but Players may room with their parents at all tournaments.

All players 14 & under are required to room with their parents.

- Parents are not permitted to discuss playtime, coaching philosophies, or any other volleyball issues with their coaches at a tournament. If a parent is upset about something with a team, he/she must wait until the day after the tournament ends before communicating with the coaches – unless it is an issue concerning school or safety. Under no circumstances may a parent contact the

coach while at a tournament. If further problems arise, please contact the Directors of the club who may schedule a meeting with the Coach, Directors, and parents together.

## **PVA DISPUTE/GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES**

PVA encourages the player to first talk to the coach when the player has a problem with playing time. If the player is unsure or unclear about what the coach expects, either in practice or in competition, the appropriate action is for the player to communicate with the coach as to what the player needs to do to get more opportunities to play in matches or at another position.

Coaches WILL NOT discuss “coaching decisions.” Coaching decisions include, among other examples, specific match decisions (who played when, who was subbed in/out and when, etc.). Playtime is a very complex determination. It includes the coach’s opinion, the player’s ability, the player’s potential, the team’s needs/game strategy at the moment, the momentum of the game, the number of subs remaining, and the team’s needs for the future. The coach will not be required to defend his/her thought process or conclusions in these determinations, and it is improper for a parent to make such a request.

In addition, PVA instructs coaches not to discuss any player other than the parent’s own or the actions of any other PVA coach. If you, as a parent, have legitimate concerns about a coach other than your player’s coach, or with a player other than your own, you should contact you’re the director.

The parent or player SHOULD NOT:

1. Confront a coach during practice or during tournaments.
2. Expect meetings to be arranged during practice or tournament participation.
3. Attempt to “compare” or evaluate another player.
4. Use profanity towards the coach.
5. Harass or threaten the coach.
6. Discuss their concerns with any other parents or players until resolved with the coach.
7. Contact coaches at any time in violation of this policy.
8. Make comments to or about players while attending tournaments.

### **POLICY ORDER:**

1. The athlete should first speak to the coach about the matter. If the matter remains unresolved, or the athlete has a reasonable concern that speaking to the coach will not resolve the matter, then move on to Step 2.
2. The parents should speak or meet with the coach. Parents and/or athletes should contact the coach via the telephone or email to set up a meeting time (never during a tournament).
  - A parent should never approach a coach at a tournament. We have instructed the coaches to refuse to discuss any controversial matter, and to refer the parents to the Directors. The coach will then walk away.
  - The recommended time for a parent to schedule a meeting is usually before or immediately following a scheduled practice. If the matter

remains unresolved or if the parent has a reasonable concern that speaking with the coach will not resolve the matter, then proceed to Step 3.

3. The parent may speak to the Facility Director(s) and request a meeting with the coach(es) and Facility Director(s) together.

- In certain situations, PVA may request the athlete to also attend.
- Meetings must be previously arranged. This will not take place at a tournament site.
- The Director(s) will not engage in discussions about coaching decisions.

4. If the issue is unresolved, the parents may ask for a meeting with the Club Director, the head coach, and the athlete. The meeting should take place at a location considered adequate for private discussion, agreed upon by the parent, coach, and director and during a scheduled time away from practice or a tournament is appropriate. The decision of the Club Director at this point is FINAL.

## **FINANCIAL POLICIES & REFUND POLICY**

Invalid Credit Card & Returned Checks: We ask that parents provide a credit card so that payments can be charged on the payment dates and ensure that payments are made on a timely basis.

In the event that a credit card needs to be charged and is later found to be invalid, an additional \$50.00 fee will be added to the bill and, if the payment is NOT made in full within 10 days, your daughter will be ineligible to practice or play until the payment is settled with the PVA office. Notification will be delivered through email; therefore, it is the

parent's responsibility to verify that a current email address is on record. Returned checks will be charged a \$50.00 reprocessing fee. Once again, if not paid in full within 10 days of the returned check email notice, your daughter will be ineligible until the full payment is settled with the PVA office.

All payments should be sent to:

**Prodigy Volleyball Academy**

**247 Route 35**

**Somers, NY 10589**

Questions can be directed to 914-649-2440 or emailed to

[Dianes@prodigyvb.com](mailto:Dianes@prodigyvb.com)

## **REFUND POLICY**

Refunds and Deposits: Upon making any PVA team, at a regular or supplemental tryout, there is a non-refundable \$500 deposit due to secure the spot. Refunds of any amount are generally only given for professionally documented medical reasons ONLY.

Any injury matters with the club must be submitted to the club in writing, including the date of incident or injury, doctor's notes including type and length of disability, and the duration of club participation.

Refunds will not be given if the players quit or discontinue playing once the Parent has signed the Player Participation Agreement. In addition, parents are expected to pay the balance of any remaining monies due if the player quits or discontinues playing for any reason.

## **TRAVEL POLICIES**

As a part of USAV's commitment to participant safety, USAV requires its clubs to have published practices for team travel. Team Travel is defined as overnight travel to a team activity that is planned and supervised by PVA.

All parents are required to stay at the designated team hotel for all "stay and play" events. When staying overnight, if players room together, coaches will remove all phones from players at curfew that are rooming together and return them in the morning. Coaches, however, reserve the right to hold players phones during tournament play each day if they do choose.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Prior to an out-of-town tournament, the coach must receive in writing the date and time the player will be arriving and departing from the event in addition to the location of stay. PVA assumes all players will be staying overnight at the PVA assigned hotel for every event unless prior written approval is granted by the Director and the Team Coach.

### **LOCAL AND TEAM TRAVEL**

We distinguish between travel to training, practice, and local competition ("local travel"), and team travel involving a coordinated overnight stay ("team travel").

#### **Local Travel**

Local travel occurs when PVA does not sponsor, coordinate, or arrange for travel. For local travel, players, or their parents/guardians are responsible for making all travel arrangements. In these instances, it is the responsibility of the player or their parents/guardians to

ensure the person transporting the player maintains all safety and legal requirements, including, but not limited to, a valid driver's license, proper insurance, well maintained vehicle, and compliance with all state laws.

Coaches, staff members and volunteers who are also a player's guardian may provide shared transportation for any player(s). We encourage guardians to pick up their player first and drop off their player last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement. We also recommend completing a shared travel declaration form signed by the parents/guardians of any minor player who is being transported as part of such a carpool arrangement.

## **Team Travel**

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when PVA sponsors, coordinates or arranges for travel so that our teams can compete locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, staff, volunteers, and chaperones will often travel with the players.

For team travel, hotels and air travel will be generally booked by the participant's parents. Players (15-18) may share rooms or stay with their parents. PVA will also notify hotel management should any special arrangements be warranted.

Players on teams 14 and under will room with their parents or designated representatives per their parents. It is also the club's policy to remove all phones at curfew from players to ensure they receive a good night's sleep and return them at breakfast. It will also be at the coaches' discretion to keep them during playtime to minimize distractions.

Although flights should not be made until 6pm, we recommend all players and parents return on the final day of competition – unless you are staying over for personal reasons. We are very conscious, of course, about not having players miss any school beyond what is necessary.

In the event that the tournament runs late (which often happens on the final day), we may cancel and forfeit any final matches which would cause players, coaches, and parents to miss their scheduled flights home and have to book additional hotel rooms – unless they are still playing for a bid. When playing for a bid, we will play until our matches and refereeing responsibilities are completed.

### **TRAVEL NOTIFICATION**

When possible, PVA will provide reasonable advance notice before team travel. Notice will include the dates, location, and duration of competition. The travel notice will also include designated team hotels for overnight stays as well as a contact person within PVA.

### **MIXED-GENDER AND MIXED-AGE TRAVEL**

PVA is made up of male and female players across various ages. Players will only share a room with other players of the same sex and age group.

### **MINOR ATHLETE ABUSE PREVENTION POLICIES**

Covered Organizations/LAOs are required to implement the following athlete abuse prevention policies. To satisfy these

requirements, USA Volleyball provides these policies to USAV member clubs. Clubs may choose to implement stricter standards.

## **SafeSport Club Policies**

1. One-on-One Interactions, including meetings and individual training sessions (Clubs are required to establish reasonable procedures to limit one-on one interaction, as set forth in federal law)
2. Massages and rubdowns/athletic training modalities in Locker rooms and changing areas
3. Social media and electronic communications
4. Local travel
5. Team travel

### **These policies shall apply to the following:**

1. Adult members at a facility that is either partially or fully under the jurisdiction of PVA.
2. Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors
3. Any adult authorized by PVA that may have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor
4. Adult staff and board members of PVA.

(Collectively “Applicable Adult” for the purposes of this policy)

## **POLICY 1 - ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTIONS**

Observable and interruptible

One-on-one interactions between a minor athlete and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) at a facility partially or fully under the jurisdiction of a OTVA are permitted if they occur at an observable and interruptible distance by another adult.

One-on-one interactions between minor athletes and an Applicable Adult (who is not the minor's legal guardian) at a facility partially or fully under the jurisdiction of a Covered Organization/LAO are prohibited, except in the circumstances described in meetings with mental health care professionals and health care providers of this section and under emergency circumstances.

Meetings between Applicable Adults and minor athletes at a facility partially or fully under the jurisdiction of a PVA may only occur if another adult is present, except under emergency circumstances. Such meetings must occur where interactions can be easily observed and at an interruptible distance from another adult.

If a one-on-one meeting takes place in an office at a facility partially or fully under the jurisdiction of PVA, the door to the office must remain unlocked and open. If available, it will occur in an office that has windows, with the windows, blinds, and/or curtains remaining open during the meeting.

#### Meetings with mental health care professionals and health care providers

If a mental health care professional and/or health care provider meets with minor athletes at a facility partially or fully under the jurisdiction of PVA, a closed-door meeting may be permitted to protect patient privacy provided that:

The door remains unlocked, and another adult is present at the facility.

The other adult is advised that a closed-door meeting is occurring written legal guardian consent is obtained in advance by the mental health care professional and/or health care provider, with a copy provided to the organization.

### Individual training sessions

Individual training sessions between Applicable Adults and minor athletes are permitted at a facility partially or fully under the jurisdiction of PVA if the training session is observable and interruptible by another adult. It is the responsibility of the Applicable Adult to obtain the written permission of the minor's legal guardian in advance of the individual training session if the individual training session is not observable and interruptible by another adult.

Permission for individual training sessions must be obtained at least every six months. Parents, guardians, and other caretakers must be allowed to observe the training session.

## **POLICY 2 - MESSAGES AND RUBDOWNS/ATHLETIC TRAINING MODALITIES**

Any massage or rubdown/athletic training modality performed at a facility or a training or competition venue under the jurisdiction of PVA must be conducted in an open and interruptible location. Any massage of a minor athlete must be done with at least one other adult present and must never be done with only the minor athlete and the person performing the massage or rubdown/athletic training modality in the room.

## **LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS**

### Non-exclusive facility

If PVA uses a facility not fully under their jurisdiction (for, e.g., training or competition or similar events) and the facility is used by multiple constituents, Applicable Adults in categories 1 through 4 are nonetheless required to adhere to the rules set forth herein.

### Use of recording devices

Use of any device's (including a cell phone's) recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras in locker rooms, changing areas, or similar spaces at a facility under the jurisdiction of PVA is prohibited. Exceptions may be made for media and championship celebrations, provided that such exceptions are approved by PVA, and two or more Applicable Adults are present.

### Undress

Under no circumstances shall an unrelated Applicable Adult at a facility under the jurisdiction of PVA intentionally expose his or her breasts, buttocks, groin, or genitals to a minor athlete.

### One-on-one interactions

Except for athletes on the same team, at no time are unrelated Applicable Adults permitted to be alone with a minor athlete in a locker room or changing area when at a facility under the partial or full jurisdiction of PVA, except under emergency circumstances. If PVA is using a facility that only has a single locker room or changing area, separate times will be designated for use by Applicable Adults, if any.

## Monitoring

PVA will regularly and randomly monitor the use of locker rooms and changing areas at facilities under their jurisdiction to ensure compliance with these policies.

## **POLICY 3 - SOCIAL MEDIA & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

As part of PVA's emphasis on athlete safety, all electronic communications between a coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

As with any communication, the content of any electronic communication should be readily available to share with the player's family. At the request of a parent or guardian, any email, electronic text, social media or similar communication will copy or include the player's parents or guardians.

## Content

All electronic communication originating from Applicable Adults to minor athletes must be professional in nature.

## Open and transparent

Absent emergency circumstances, if an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes needs to communicate directly with a minor athlete via electronic communications (including social media), another Applicable Adult or the minor athlete's legal guardian will be copied.

If a minor athlete communicates with an Applicable Adult (with authority over the minor athlete) privately first, said Applicable Adult

should respond to the minor athlete with a copy to another Applicable Adult or the minor athlete's legal guardian.

When an Applicable Adult with authority over minor athletes communicates electronically to the entire team, said Applicable Adult will copy another adult.

Minor athletes may "friend" the organization's official page.

#### Facebook, Myspace, blogs, and similar sites

Coaches may not have athletes of PVA's Team join a personal social media page. Athlete members and parents can friend the official PVA's Team page and coaches can communicate to athlete members through the site. All posts, messages, text, or media of any kind between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities or for team-oriented motivational purposes.

#### Twitter, instant messaging and similar media

Coaches and athletes may "follow" each other. Coaches are discouraged from direct messaging on Twitter, Instagram, or any other social media site. All posts between coach and athlete must be for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

#### Email and similar/electronic communications.

Athletes and coaches may use email to communicate. All email content between coach and athlete must be professional in nature and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

#### Texting and similar electronic communications

Texting is allowed between coaches and athletes. All texts between coach and athlete must be professional and for the purpose of communicating information about team activities.

### Electronic imagery

From time to time, digital photos, videos of practice or competition, and other publicly obtainable images of the athlete – individually or in groups – may be taken. These photos and/or videos may be submitted to local, state, or national publications, used in club videos, posted on club or club associated websites or offered to the club families seasonally on disc or other electronic form. It is the default policy of PVA to allow such practices as long as the athlete or athletes are in public view and such imagery is both appropriate and in the best interest of the athlete and the club. Imagery must not be contrary to any rules as outlined in PVA's Participant Safety Handbook.

### Request to discontinue all electronic communication or imagery.

The parents or guardians of an athlete may request in writing that their child not be contacted by any form of electronic communication by coaches or Applicable Adults subject to this policy. (Photography or videography). PVA will abide by any such request that their minor athlete not be contacted via electronic communication, absent emergency circumstances.

### Misconduct

Social media and electronic communications can also be used to commit misconduct (e.g., emotional, sexual, bullying, harassment, and hazing). Such communications by coaches, staff, volunteers,

administrators, officials, parents or athletes will not be tolerated and are considered violations of our Participant Safety Handbook.

## Violations

Violations of PVA's Electronic Communications and social media Policy should be reported to your immediate supervisor, an PVA administrator or a member of PVA's Participant Safety Committee for evaluation. Complaints and allegations will be addressed under PVA's Disciplinary Rules and Procedure.

## **LOCAL TRAVEL & TEAM TRAVEL**

This policy shall apply to:

1. Adult members who have regular contact with amateur athletes who are minors
2. Any adult authorized by PVA to have regular contact with or authority over an amateur athlete who is a minor
3. Adult staff and board members of PVA

(Collectively "Applicable Adult" for the purposes of this policy)

## **POLICY 4 - LOCAL TRAVEL**

Local travel consists of travel to training, practice, and competition that occurs locally and does not include coordinated overnight stay(s).

### Transportation

Applicable Adults who are not also acting as a legal guardian, shall not ride in a vehicle alone with an unrelated minor athlete, absent emergency circumstances, and must have always at least two minor

athletes or another adult, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor athlete's parent/legal guardian in advance of each local travel.

## **POLICY 5 - TEAM TRAVEL**

Team travel is travel to a competition or other team activity that the organization plans and supervises.

### Team/competition travel

When only one Applicable Adult and one minor athlete travel to a competition, the minor athlete must have his/her legal guardian's written permission in advance and for each competition to travel alone with said Applicable Adult.

### Hotel Room

Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangements with a minor player. (Unless the coach is the parent, guardian, or sibling of the player) However, a parent/legal guardian may consent to such an arrangement in advance and in writing. Furthermore, a parent/legal guardian may consent in advance and in writing to the minor athlete sharing a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with an adult athlete.

Coach or his/her designee will establish a curfew by when all players must be in their hotel rooms in a supervised location. Regular monitoring and curfew checks will be made to each room by at least two properly background screened adults. At no time should one adult be present in the room with minor players, regardless of gender.

Team personnel should ask hotels to block adult pay per view channels.

## Meetings

Meetings shall be conducted consistent with the PVA policy for one-on-one interactions.

Individual meetings between coach and player may not occur in hotel sleeping rooms and must be held in a public setting or with additional adults present with one of those adults being the same gender as the player.

For any further questions about any issues or policies contained in the Handbook, please contact Diane at 914-649-6-2440 or email her at [Dianes@prodigyvb.com](mailto:Dianes@prodigyvb.com)