

# Brookline Baseball & Softball

## Athlete Protection Policy

*Final Version: 1/15/2019*

Brookline Baseball and Softball's goal is to provide a lasting positive experience for every child participating in our program. We therefore have zero tolerance for child abuse in any form. The Brookline Board has established the following **Athlete Protection Policy** to ensure the safety and well-being of all the children in our league.

**I. Brookline's Definitions of Child Abuse.** Brookline defines child abuse in accordance with Pennsylvania State Law:

### Physical Abuse-Definition

Citation: Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 23, § 6303

The term 'child abuse' shall mean intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly doing any of the following:

- Causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act
- Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act
- Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act (note: this does not include unintentional sports-related injuries, which are an unavoidable risk of participation in baseball or softball).
- Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child (see definition below) through any recent act or failure to act
- Causing serious physical neglect of a child
- Engaging in any of the following recent acts:
  - Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing, or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child
  - Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location, or the duration of the restraint or confinement
  - Interfering with the breathing of a child
  - Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the actor knows or reasonably should have known:
    - Is required to register as a Tier II or Tier III sexual offender, when the victim of the sexual offense was younger than age 18 when the crime was committed
    - Has been determined to be a sexually violent predator
    - Has been determined to be a sexually violent delinquent child

### Sexual Abuse/Exploitation-Definition

Citation: Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 23, § 6303

'Sexual abuse or exploitation' means any of the following:

- The employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of a child to engage in or assist another individual to engage in sexually explicit conduct, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Looking at the sexual or other intimate parts of a child or another individual for the purpose of arousing or gratifying sexual desire in any individual
- Participating in sexually explicit conversation either in person, by telephone, by computer, or by a computer-aided device for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual
- Actual or simulated sexual activity or nudity for the purpose of sexual stimulation or gratification of any individual
- Actual or simulated sexual activity for the purpose of producing visual depiction, including photographing, videotaping, computer depicting, or filming
- Any of the following offenses committed against a child:
  - Rape, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3121
  - Statutory sexual assault, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3122.1
  - Involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3123
  - Sexual assault, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3124.1
  - Institutional sexual assault, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3124.2
  - Aggravated indecent assault, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3125
  - Indecent assault, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3126
  - Indecent exposure, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 3127
  - Incest, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 4302
  - Prostitution, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 5902
  - Sexual abuse of children, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 6312
  - Unlawful contact with a minor, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 6318
  - Sexual exploitation of children, as defined in 18 Pa.C.S. § 6320

## **II. Requirements of Brookline Adult Personnel for Background Checks, Training, and Reporting**

- At the beginning of each calendar year, all Brookline coaches and any other individuals over the age of 18 having direct contact with children in Brookline activities are required to submit, or to affirm the league has on file, the following documentation:
  - (1) a Pennsylvania criminal background check certificate
  - (2) a Pennsylvania child abuse history certificate
  - (3) a SafeSport Abuse Recognition and Reporting Training certificate
 Brookline considers certification documents (1) and (2) valid for three years after the date of completion. SafeSport training certificates will be valid for two seasons.
- No individual will be allowed contact with children in Brookline without valid, un-expired versions of the 3 documents above on file with the league. The validity of each coach's/volunteer's documents will be checked by Brookline's Safety Officer and/or other designated members of Brookline's Board of Directors.
- Brookline requires all coaches and any other individuals over the age of 18 having direct contact with children participating in our league to report any/all incidences of child abuse, following the PA legal definition of "mandatory reporters":

Citation: Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Title 23, § 6311

The following adults are required to report:

- Any person, paid or unpaid, who, on the basis of the person's role in a program, activity, or service, is a person responsible for the child's welfare or has direct contact with children

- An individual supervised or managed by a person listed above who has direct contact with children

### **III. Required Reporting Mechanism for Brookline Coaches and other Adults with Direct**

**Contact with Children.** In accordance with federal and state law, all Brookline coaches and other individuals over the age of 18 with direct contact with children are required to report child abuse (as defined above), within 24 hours of receiving information that creates reasonable suspicion of abuse, to both of the following:

- Directly to the Pennsylvania ChildLine 1-800-932-0313, or through Pennsylvania’s Child Welfare Portal (<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>), or (particularly in cases where the safety of the child is at immediate risk) to the Haverford Township Police Department 610-853-1298 within 24 hours of becoming aware of a potentially abusive situation.
- Directly to the President of Brookline or his/her designate (typically the Vice President of Baseball or Vice President of Softball) when the President is unavailable, within 24 hours of having a reasonable suspicion of abuse.

Because the safety of the children in our league is our first concern, Brookline’s policy is to encourage reporting to authorities whenever there is a reasonable suspicion or belief that abuse has occurred, even in cases where there is uncertainty, and regardless of how long ago the abuse occurred.

*Assurance of Confidentiality.* The identity of anyone reporting abuse to Brookline leadership will be kept confidential. However when there is reasonable suspicion of abuse, the league will also file a report with Pennsylvania ChildLine and/or the Haverford Township Police Department (as required by law), and Brookline will strongly encourage any person reporting abuse to the league to also report it to authorities.

**IV. Brookline’s Rules of Behavior to Enhance Athlete Safety.** Before each season, all Brookline coaches and other adult volunteers with direct contact with children will be required to agree to the following Rules of Behavior in order to clearly establish appropriate boundaries in Brookline coaches’/volunteers’ relationships with Brookline’s athletes.

- Coaches/volunteers should not transport an unrelated athlete by himself/herself—the coach/volunteer should have their own child, another athlete, or another adult ride along.
- Coaches/volunteers should never meet 1-on-1 with unrelated athletes outside of Brookline facilities.
- When 1-on-1 interactions between a coach and an unrelated athlete occur at Brookline facilities, these interactions should always take place in public areas and within view of other adults.
- Brookline strongly recommends that all games, practices, workouts, and meetings should always have at least two adults present (the “buddy system.”)
- Coaches/volunteers should never interact directly with unrelated athletes via 1-on-1 texts, email, telephone, or social media (Instagram, FaceBook, Twitter, SnapChat, etc.). Note: this policy does not preclude older children (with parental permission) from adding their email address or cell phone number to team-wide messaging applications, but coaches/volunteers should never use these applications to communicate individually with unrelated children.

- There is zero tolerance in Brookline for coaches'/volunteers' using explicitly sexual language around children, including (but not limited to) sexually oriented stories, comments, jokes, innuendoes, asking an athlete about sexual issues, or any other harassing behavior.
- Recognizing that appropriate touches (high fives, pats on the back, handshakes, etc.) are a vital component of a healthy coach-athlete relationship, Brookline nevertheless expects all coaches to strictly avoid any inappropriate touching of athletes that could be construed as sexual, harassing, threatening, or demeaning. It is never appropriate for a coach/volunteer to touch the groin, genital area, buttocks, or breasts of an athlete.
- Coaches/volunteers are not allowed to massage an unrelated athlete, even if the coach is a certified massage therapist or health care professional.
- Photography of athletes should not be taken, saved, or distributed if there are any displaced uniforms/clothing, should never be taken in changing areas or bathrooms, and should never include sexualized imagery.
- For travel or tournament team activities involving overnight stays, coaches/volunteers are prohibited from sharing rooms with unrelated athletes. Exception: camps or other facilities with large communal sleeping areas occupied by several people.

Coaches who violate the rules of behavior listed above are subject to immediate dismissal from the league, as well as reporting to authorities if their behavior could be construed as child abuse.