

## **GOLDEN VALLEY GIRLS SOFTBALL PLAYER SAFETY POLICY**

Golden Valley Girls Softball (GVGS) believes in providing a fun and safe slow pitch softball experience for all players. This policy is intended to ensure that players are not subjected to conduct that would be antithetical to that goal. This policy is not intended to address injuries that naturally may occur when playing softball, such as sprains, strains, broken bones, concussions, etc., and that are an assumed risk of playing softball. Rather, this policy addresses conduct and behavior that should not be a part of any sport and is completely unacceptable.

Specifically, GVGS prohibits bullying, threatening behavior, harassment, hazing, sexual misconduct, physical misconduct, and emotional misconduct. It is the responsibility of everyone in the GVGS community, including coaches, players, volunteers, and independent contractors to comply with this policy and to make sure that such behavior does not occur.

The conduct prohibited by this policy will be referred to as “Prohibited Conduct.” This policy is not intended to apply to ordinary and reasonable “in-game” conduct, such as a coach questioning an umpire’s decision (assuming the coach does so in a reasonable fashion and without bullying, threatening, or engaging in Prohibited Conduct) or two players inadvertently running into one another.

The following is Prohibited Conduct and, for purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply. Note that some behavior may fall within more than one category.

*Bullying:* Using force, threats, or coercion to abuse, intimidate or dominate others. Bullying may be physical, verbal, written, or social (including social media/ cyberbullying). Examples include name calling, teasing, spreading rumors, and unwanted physical force.

*Threatening Behavior:* Physical, verbal, written or social (including via social media) threats to physically injure or otherwise harm another.

*Harassment:* Physical, verbal, written or social (including social media) conduct or communications that degrades, humiliates, offends, or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group because of the individual or group’s race, color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, national origin, familial status, culture, age, mental or physical disability, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law.

*Hazing:* The practice of rituals, challenges, and other activities that involve harassment, abuse, or humiliation as a form of initiation to a group. Examples include physically restraining another person, beating another person, requiring the consumption of alcohol or other items, or requiring sexual behavior.

*Sexual Abuse, Molestation, or Misconduct:* Any form of sexual or gender harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual exploitation, exposing others to sexual images or taking or distributing inappropriate sexual images of another, and other inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature. Examples include a coach engaging in sexual activity with a player or exploiting a player.

*Physical Abuse or Misconduct:* Any conduct that causes or threatens to cause physical harm to another person. Examples include punching, hitting, biting, and kicking.

*Emotional Abuse or Misconduct:* Any conduct that causes or threatens to cause emotional harm to another person. Examples include verbal abusing another and throwing objects.

### Background Checks and Training

All individuals who submit a written application to coach in GVGS and who are selected to coach are required to complete a criminal background check and child safety training by Trusted Coaches, a third-party vendor, as well as any other training required by GVGS. This will apply to the two primary coaches of each team, as well as to any parents or other adult volunteers who regularly and frequently assist the two primary coaches. GVGS umpires are also required to complete a criminal background check through the United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA). Anyone with a history of physical violence or sex related offenses will not be allowed to be a coach or umpire for GVGS.

### Coach, Volunteer, Independent Contractor & Player Interactions

There must be at least two non-player adults at each practice, game, and other event (per team). Whenever possible, the adults should not be from the same household or family. If the two primary coaches for a team cannot both attend a practice, game, or other event, another parent may attend as long as one primary coach is in attendance. If neither of the two primary coaches are available, then a practice, game, or other event shall not be held. Contact the respective Junior or Senior League Vice President or the GVGS President for anticipated absences and for help in making sure there is sufficient adult supervision (see their contact information in the “Reporting Procedure” section below).

Coaches, volunteers, and non-player independent contractors should take special care when engaging in one-on-one interactions with a player. One-on-one interactions between a player and an adult who is not the player’s parent or guardian is permissible if it occurs at an observable and an interruptible distance by another adult.

Coaches, volunteers, and non-player independent contractors are prohibited from engaging in any sexual or other intimate activity with any player, whether on their own team or another team, and without regard to the player’s age. This means that even if a player is a legal adult, such activity is still prohibited.

Coaches, volunteers, and non-player independent contractors are prohibited from connecting with players via Facebook, Instagram, or other social media applications (except for their own child). Coaches may communicate with players on their own team via email, text, or a team-specific application regarding information about team activities only, nothing personal. All email and text communications with players must include a copy to the players’ parents/guardians, and parents must be included in any team-specific application. If a parent/guardian requests that their child not be contacted through a certain form of communication, the coach shall honor that request.

### No Weapons

Except as otherwise allowed by applicable law, guns, knives, and other weapons are expressly prohibited at any GVGS practice, game, or other activity.

### Reporting Procedure

Any player, coach, volunteer, or non-player independent contractor who believes they have been subjected to Prohibited Conduct or who is aware of possible Prohibited Conduct should feel free to object to the behavior if they are comfortable doing so. Instead of doing so, or in addition to doing so, the player, coach, volunteer, or non-player independent contractor must report the alleged act immediately or as soon as practicable to the GVGS President, the Junior League Vice President, or the Senior League Vice President. Reports can be made anonymously, although that may make it more difficult for allegations to be investigated. In 2021, the individuals in the above-referenced position are:

- GVGS President – Lenny Segal, 612-845-0358 or lsegal68@comcast.net
- Junior League Vice President – Allison Hood, 763-360-3543 or ahood01@hamline.edu
- Senior League Vice President – Jenn Mullen, 763-360-2908 or jennmullen7387@gmail.com

While GVGS understands that reporting Prohibited Conduct may be difficult or uncomfortable, it must be done to ensure that we maintain a safe environment for all our players.

### Investigation

1. Reports of Prohibited Conduct will be investigated promptly, impartially, and completely. In GVGS's discretion or as required by law, GVGS may retain an outside investigator to investigate or may bring the report to legal authorities. Although GVGS will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible, it cannot guarantee complete confidentiality, and GVGS and any outside investigator reserves the right to make such disclosures as it deems appropriate, subject to applicable law that would require confidentiality.
2. Although each investigation is unique, investigation of a report normally will include conferring with the reporting party, the individual alleged to have engaged in Prohibit Conduct, and any named or apparent witnesses. Players, coaches, and volunteers are expected to cooperate in an investigation.

### Child Abuse, Sexual Abuse or Molestation, and Sexual Misconduct

If a coach, volunteer, or independent contractor reasonably suspects that a player is or has been subjected to child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual molestation, or sexual misconduct, whether by someone affiliated with GVGS or not, they must immediately report it to the applicable law enforcement authorities (e.g., Golden Valley Police Department). The coach, volunteer, or

independent contractor should not confront the alleged wrongdoer or attempt to handle the matter themselves. While it is understandable that an individual may be hesitant about reporting sexual abuse or misconduct, it is critical to do so and let the legal authorities do their job. In addition to reporting to law enforcement, the individual should immediately report the alleged conduct to the GVGS President, Junior League Vice President, or Senior League Vice President, as identified in the “Reporting Procedure” section above.

Any coach, volunteer, or independent contractor who is the subject of a report of child abuse, sexual abuse, sexual molestation, or sexual misconduct, will immediately be suspended pending the results of the investigation.

Given the serious nature of these allegations, GVGS trusts that people will act responsibly and will not make a malicious, frivolous, or bad faith report. If based on an investigation it is determined that a report was made maliciously, frivolously, or in bad faith, GVGS will take appropriate disciplinary action and, potentially, it could subject the individual to civil or criminal liability.

#### Protection Against Retaliation

No retaliation of any kind will occur because an individual has in good faith reported an incident of Prohibited Conduct or participated in an investigation. If the Prohibited Conduct recurs after being reported, it should immediately be reported to the GVGS President, Junior League Vice President, or Senior League Vice President, as identified in the “Reporting Procedure” section above.

#### Discipline

The facts shall determine the response to each report. Prompt disciplinary action designed to stop Prohibited Conduct and to prevent its recurrence will be taken against any individual who violates this policy. Based on the seriousness of the offense and any other relevant factors, such disciplinary action may include, among others, a verbal or written reprimand, temporary suspension, or expulsion from GVGS. The city of Golden Valley may also impose its own sanctions.

#### Conclusion

GVGS is committed to providing a fun and safe softball experience for all players. GVGS greatly appreciates the cooperation of all members of the GVGS community in this regard.