



Four Seasons of Fun!

Youth & Travel Sports
Parents & Players Handbook

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Welcome youth sports and travel team participants and parents,

The Wells Parks & Recreation Department's youth sports and travel programs are designed to give each child an understanding of the importance of becoming a life-long participant in sports and physical activity.

Our goal is to provide a positive and fun experience for all participants. As a participant or a parent of a participant, you play a key role in that experience. Always remember the objective of the program is for the boys and girls to develop socially, mentally, and physically. We stress the importance of encouragement, and a positive attitude toward all participants in the program.

Today there are many negative reports about youth sports programs in our society. Most of these issues arise from overzealous adults who do not understand the objectives of youth sports programs and what constitutes a positive experience for the children.

This handbook has been developed to help participants and their families understand this department's expectations, and how to achieve a positive youth and travel experience for all involved.

Your support helps make youth sports programs fun and successful. Youth and travel sports programs cannot exist without the positive influences that you bring.

Thank you for your support.

Wells Parks & Recreation Youth Sports Philosophy

The Wells Parks & Recreation Department is dedicated to teaching children in our community the fundamentals of youth sports in a safe, positive, and age-appropriate manner. We encourage physical, psychological and social growth and work to build life-long athletes and fitness enthusiasts among our youth. This department emphasizes placing the emotional and physical well-being of any youth athlete ahead of any personal desire to win.

To support this philosophy ...

- We are inclusive of all participants who desire to play and follow the guidelines set forth by this department.
- We provide developmental and participation based programs.
- We provide programs that allow children to have a chance to participate equally.
- We expect our programs to incorporate fair play, good sportsmanship, playing for fun, and to encourage physical activity, skill building, and teamwork.
- We ask that all coaches fill out background check forms
- We believe in programs that leave time for other pursuits or interests.

The Recreation Department will provide ...

A safe environment for your child to play.

Schedules for practices, games and meets in a timely manner.

Facility support and information for practice, game, and meet days.

A procedure that is fair and consistent with administrative decisions regarding rules, team formation, and special needs of players.

An environment where inclusion is expected among our participants

We expect that the players will ...

Know, understand and honor the commitments made to the team.

Always try to do his or her best.

Respect and cooperate with all coaches, officials, teammates, administrators, opponents, and parents/guardians.

Not “show off”, engage in “trash talking” or taunting teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, or spectators.

Respect equipment and facilities

Expect to be treated fairly and with respect.

Expect to play and equal amount of playing time according to the program rules and regulations.

Hold accountable the coaches, parents, fans, game officials, and administrators to provide an environment where participants can learn, be safe, and have fun.

We expect that the parents/guardians will ...

Register children on time and within the guidelines of the Recreation Department's policies.

Not engage in any unsportsmanlike conduct with any coach, official, or administrator during a practice or game. (If you have any issue that needs addressing, please wait until after the program is over and ask to speak to that individual away from the playing area.)

Encourage children to treat teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, and spectators with respect.

Be a positive role model for his/her child and encourage good sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy for all players, officials, and coaches.

Learn the rules and regulations of the sport in which your child is a participant.

Emphasize the importance of practice time for your child as a beneficial time for learning.

Refrain from coaching your child or other players during practices, games or meets, unless the assigned coach or official asks for your assistance.

Put the emotional or physical well being of children ahead of any personal desire to win.

Praise your children for competing fairly and doing his/her best.

Enjoy the process of watching your child learn and play.

Remember that the court, field or mat is an extension of your child's classroom and that learning is part of his or her growth and development.

Respect the program and the volunteer's time by dropping children off and picking them up on time.

We expect that coaches will ...

Provide a safe and fun environment for the players.

Create a positive atmosphere for players to demonstrate the highest level of sportsmanship to coaches, players, parents, fans, and officials.

Not engage in any unsportsmanlike conduct with any parent, official, or administrator during a practice, game or meet.

Communicate with players and parents regarding expectations, philosophy, schedules, and cancellations.

Teach players the rules, regulations, and skills needed for their sport.

Provide practices that are fun, organized, and safe.

Serve as a positive role model.

Make sure all players experience an equal amount of playing time in accordance with the program's policy.

Promote the emotional and physical well being of all players ahead of any personal desire to win.

We expect officials to ...

Know the rules of the sport they are officiating.

Be on time for games/meets.

Make sure equipment and playing space is safe.

Teach and demonstrate proper skills when necessary.

Communicate with coaches.

Not engage in unsportsmanlike conversation or conduct with coaches, players, and spectators

Spectator Etiquette

While enthusiasm and cheering during a game can be inspiring, it is important to remember that your children need you to be positive and encouraging at all times. Spectators should remember the following guidelines for behavior when watching their children participate in our youth sports programs.

- **Cheer, don't coach.** Avoid yelling specific instructions and issuing commands. Coaching from the bleachers or sidelines can be extremely confusing for a child and possibly contrary to the coach's instructions.
- **Practice Silence.** Sometimes silence is more relaxing for both parents and players and you will likely view the game differently as well.
- **Ask your children if they like you to cheer.** The answer may surprise you.
- **Be positive, never negative.**
- **Keep some comments to yourself.** Do not speak out to the referee or official. Do not direct comments to the members of the opposition, unless they are complimentary.
- **Demonstrate good sportsmanship.** Applaud exceptional moves / plays by both teams.
- **Accept the results of each game.** Encourage your child to be gracious in victory. Find something positive with each game, no matter what the outcome, by working towards helping your child improve his or her skills.
- **Overall, parents/guardians should be cheerleaders.** Allow the coach to coach, the referee to officiate, and most of all allow your child to play the game.

**Wells Parks & Recreation
Coach, Parent, & Athlete "Code of Conduct" Contract**

I, as a coach, parent, player, or spectator pledge to conduct myself in a manner that complies with the Wells Parks & Recreation "Code of Conduct" at all times. Accordingly, I pledge to:

1. Demonstrate respect to other players, coaches, parents, officials and spectators;
 2. Demonstrate and encourage good sportsmanship and the concepts of fair play;
 3. Focus on fun and participation; accept the outcome of the game
 4. Know and abide by the Rules of the game, the established guidelines, and all eligibility requirements;
 5. Understand that the safety and welfare of all concerned is the top priority;
 6. Support the drug, alcohol, and tobacco free environment that is important for all youth sporting events;
 7. To conduct myself in a sportsmanlike manner, both as players and as spectators.
- Unsportsmanlike behavior directed toward other players, teams, officials, coaches and fans will not be tolerated. This includes obscene gestures, cheating, disrespect to officials or other behavior deemed inappropriate for the event

Further, I pledge NOT to:

1. Ever use profanity or obscene gestures at a youth event;
2. Criticize coaches, players or game officials;
3. Touch or make a gesture to an opposing player, coach, or game official in a threatening manner.
4. Humiliate team members; home or visiting teams, parents, fans, coaches, or officials.
5. Participate in a fight during a game or practice; If so you will not be allowed to play or be at any practices or games for the remainder of the season.
6. If an athlete receives 2 game disqualifications during the season for unsportsmanlike behavior they will be required to forfeit any participation in that sport for the remainder of the season.

This contract and pledge must be signed by any player, coach, official, and parent who wishes to participate in any Wells Parks & Recreation Youth event.

By signing this document, I agree to abide by and uphold the above stated "Code of Conduct" and have read the Wells Parks & Recreation Coach, Parent & Player Handbook and understand that violating this Code either by commission or omission will be subject to penalties as stated in the in the "Code of Conduct" which has been provided to all chapters, coaches and officials.

Date: _____

Player Name: _____ Signature: _____

Parent Name: _____ Signature: _____

Team/Sport: _____

Wells Parks & Recreation School and Activity Center Use Policies

In the past school staff has seen, apprehended, and reported unsupervised children running, screaming, and bouncing balls in the hallways. Unsupervised children have also been running in the cafeteria and stage, going in and out of the library, writing on school information boards, and wandering throughout the school going in and out of classrooms.

The principal has been quite patient with the Recreation department and its participants. However, if this type of behavior continues it will jeopardize the Recreation Department's ability to utilize school facilities in the future and programs such as these may not be offered.

School and Recreation policies are:

- No unsupervised children are allowed in the hallways. This includes middle school age as well. All children participating and watching are to stay in the designated area.
- Everyone must stay in designated area – gym, Multi Purpose Room or stage side of the Activity Center. The cafeteria, stage, library and hallways are off limits.
- Children must be supervised at all times while on school or Recreation property.
- **No food or drinks in the gym, Multi Purpose Room or stage side of the Activity Center.** (except water)
- Basketballs stay in the gym.
- Please stay off the rock climbing wall.
- No one is allowed to sit on the bleachers when they are closed.
- Do Not enter the gym from the side doors, please use the main entrance.
- Please wipe your feet, no wet shoes on the gym floor.
- No black soled shoes that leave marks on the floor.

If we work together to prevent further issues, we can ensure the future of our Recreation programs here at the school.

Thank you,
Wells Parks & Recreation

**Wells Parks & Recreation
Program Waiver, Liability, & Disciplinary**

Video Recording / Photography

I hereby authorize the Wells Recreation Department and/or the Town of Wells, without limitation, the right to use video tapes, audio recordings and/or photographs of myself or my child, made or taken during or in conjunction with my or his/her participation in this recreation department program or activity, with or without reference to me or him/her by name, for promotion, documentation, advertising, public relations, or general advancement of the Wells Recreation Department programs and activities.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Inappropriate behavior including weapons possession or usage, fighting, sexual harassment, vandalism, abusive language, smoking, illegal drug possession or usage and/or intentionally harmful acts will result in the following actions and other actions deemed necessary, but not limited to the following:

- Step 1. Verbal warning, parental notification and Incident Report filed at Recreation Department.
- Step 2. Written Disciplinary Form filed at Recreation office and participant dismissed for remainder of program.
- Step 3. Immediate, indefinite suspension from all Recreation Department programs.

WAIVER AGREEMENT

I (we) hereby acknowledge that I (we) understand the policies and risk involved in sports programs and activities and furthermore, release the Town of Wells, it's agents and employees from any and all civil liability of any nature arising out of the activity, attendance, or involvement of my (our) children in activities sponsored by the Town of Wells and the Parks & Recreation Dept., it's agents, and employees. I (we) hereby acknowledge that I (we) understand the video recording, photography, and disciplinary procedures on this form and agree to them.

By signing a registration form or signing up on line at wellsrec.org I(we) agree to the above procedures and give the participant(s) permission to attend Rec. programs.

Wells Parks & Recreation Policies on Youth & Travel Sports

Registration:

- All players are required to register in the given time period. If a player is not registered until after the registration period has ended, then that player will be placed on a team ONLY if there is space available.
- Siblings will be placed together if they are in the same age group. (Unless requested not to)
- Volunteer coaches will have their child(ren) placed on the team they are coaching. (Unless requested)
- All players will be grouped in teams according to the age/grade they are in. No child will be allowed to 'move up' more than 1 age/grade. (With the exception of Rec. travel teams)

Equipment and Uniforms:

- T-shirts are given to all youth players in Soccer and Basketball.
- Soccer players are required to wear shin guards and a mouth guard to practice and games.
- Basketball players are asked to wear sneakers that you do not wear outside.
- Lacrosse players are required to wear the appropriate equipment for their gender and position. (Please inquire with the Rec. or coach)
- Wrestling participants are required to wear appropriate equipment.
- Rain or snow boots, dress shoes, sandals, or open toe shoes are not acceptable footwear for youth or travel practices or games.

Jewelry:

- Wearing jewelry is prohibited during all games/meets in all our youth and travel sports programs. The only exception would be a medical alert bracelet or necklace. In that event we ask that the player conceal it under their shirt or tape it so it does not cause injury to themselves or other players.
- Please do not have your child's ears pierced during their sports season. Earrings cannot be worn on the field or court and tape will not cover them. During a travel game the official will not let you play; no exceptions.

Awards and Certificates:

- The Recreation Department will supply each youth coach with participation certificates to be passed out to players at the end of the season. Coaches may choose to do this at the last game or practice.
- We do not provide nor encourage the handing out of trophies or other tangible awards to single players or only one team.

Team Snacks:

- Often parents will bring snacks to the games for players. We do not discourage this but we do encourage you to provide healthy snacks for your players. While cupcakes and cookies are fun, they are not the best nutritional value for young athletes during a game. Fresh fruit, trail mix, juices are better choices that we would encourage as a healthy snack. Please be aware of food allergies.

Officials:

- Most of our Youth sports officials are High School athletes / students. They know the game which they are officiating. However please remember they are still kids and will get nervous. For some this may be their first time doing this and may not be overly confident in front of a crowd of adults.
- Please consider these factors before you feel they deserve a verbal lashing over a call they made (or didn't make)
- The officials for travel teams are paid professionals however this still does not give you the OK to yell or scream at them over calls.
- If you have any issues with an official's behavior or calls please speak to the facility supervisor.

Weather Cancellations:

- **Soccer & Lacrosse** – Practice or games may be cancelled in the event of rain or previous rain that has flooded the field to the extent that they are unsafe for play. Most cancellations are made on the morning or afternoon of the practice or game. (Travel game cancellations may also depend on the opposing team) The Rec. will contact the coaches who will contact their team. A message will also be announced at the schools and on the Rec. answering machine.
- **Basketball** – Practice or games may be cancelled in the event of inclement weather and/or poor driving conditions. Most cancellations are made on the morning or afternoon of the practice or game. (Travel game cancellations may also depend on the opposing team) The Rec. will contact the coaches who will contact their team. A message will also be announced at the schools and on the Rec. answering machine.
- **Wrestling** - Practice or meets may be cancelled in the event of inclement weather and/or poor driving conditions. Most cancellations are made on the morning or afternoon of the practice or meet. (Meet cancellations may also depend on the opposing teams) The Rec. will contact the coaches who will contact their team. A message will also be announced at the schools and on the Rec. answering machine.
- **Email** – Cancellation notification may be sent out via email. Please make sure your email address is included and correct on the online registration program.
- **Text Message** - Cancellation notification may be sent out via text message. Please make sure your cell number is included and correct on the online registration program.