

SEATTLE THUNDERBOLTS CRICKET ACADEMY

Athlete Safety, Safeguarding, Anti-Harassment & Code of Conduct Policy

Applies to: Youth Boys • Youth Girls • Adult Athletes • Coaches • Staff • Volunteers • Parents/Guardians • Contractors • Guests

Coverage: Academy Training • Private/Small-Group Coaching • Matches • Local Tournaments • Domestic Travel • International Travel • Camps • Tours • Team Events • Online Communications

Effective Date: __06/01/2026_____

Policy Owner: Seattle Thunderbolts Cricket Academy

Safeguarding Contact: ____Phani Chitneni_____

Reporting Email: phani.chitneni@gmail.com

Emergency Contact: __425-444-6046_____

1. PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT

Seattle Thunderbolts Cricket Academy ("Thunderbolts" or "the Academy") is committed to providing a safe, respectful, inclusive and positive cricket environment for every participant.

The Academy serves:

- youth boys;
- youth girls;
- adult recreational and competitive players;
- elite and high-performance athletes;
- academy and representative teams;
- tournament teams;
- visiting players; and
- athletes participating in local, regional, national and international competitions.

The Academy has **zero tolerance for abuse, sexual misconduct, harassment, bullying, hazing, discrimination, retaliation or inappropriate adult-minor relationships.**

Winning, selection, playing time, scholarships, advancement or competitive success will never take priority over athlete safety.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all Academy-related activities, whether occurring at an Academy facility or elsewhere, including:

- indoor and outdoor practices;
- individual and small-group coaching;
- matches and tournaments;
- camps and clinics;
- strength and conditioning;
- team meetings;
- social and team-building events;
- transportation;
- hotels and overnight stays;
- domestic and international tours;
- changing areas;
- electronic and social-media communications;
- Academy-sponsored meals and gatherings; and
- any other activity in which an individual is participating or acting on behalf of the Academy.

The Policy applies to coaches, assistant coaches, employees, contractors, administrators, volunteers, team managers, adult athletes, youth athletes, parents/guardians and other individuals participating in Academy programs.

3. SAFEGUARDING OF MINOR ATHLETES

For purposes of this Policy, a **Minor Athlete** is an athlete under 18 years of age.

All coaches, staff, volunteers and adult participants interacting with Minor Athletes are expected to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Observable and Interruptible Standard

Whenever reasonably possible, interactions between an adult and a Minor Athlete must be **observable and interruptible**.

This means another person should be able to see, hear or reasonably interrupt the interaction.

Closed-door, isolated one-on-one meetings between an unrelated adult and a Minor Athlete should not occur except in an emergency or other specifically authorized circumstance.

Individual Coaching

Individual coaching sessions involving a Minor Athlete should:

- occur in an open or observable area;
- allow a parent/guardian to observe where reasonably practicable;
- be scheduled through Academy-approved channels; and
- not involve unnecessary isolation of the athlete.

Parents/guardians may observe their child's individual training sessions subject to reasonable facility and safety requirements.

4. PROHIBITION AGAINST ABUSE

The Academy prohibits all forms of abuse.

This includes:

Sexual Abuse or Misconduct

Prohibited conduct includes:

- sexual contact with a Minor Athlete;
- sexual touching;
- sexual comments or jokes directed toward an athlete;
- requesting or sending sexually explicit photographs or messages;
- exposing an athlete to sexual material;
- grooming behavior;
- inappropriate romantic or sexual relationships involving a coach and an athlete over whom the coach has authority;
- sexual exploitation; and
- any other sexual behavior inconsistent with professional sporting boundaries.

A Minor Athlete cannot provide valid permission for conduct prohibited by this Policy.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse includes intentionally causing physical injury or using exercise, bowling workloads, running, physical conditioning or other sporting activity as an abusive or dangerous punishment.

Reasonable cricket training and conditioning conducted safely and for legitimate athletic purposes is permitted.

Emotional Abuse

Repeated humiliation, threats, degradation, intimidation, deliberate isolation or other serious emotionally abusive conduct is prohibited.

Coaches may provide strong performance feedback and discipline, but it must remain professional and focused on athletic development.

5. ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Harassment of any athlete, coach, employee, volunteer, official, parent or participant is prohibited.

Harassment may be verbal, physical, visual, sexual or electronic.

Examples include:

- offensive comments;
- repeated personal insults;
- sexual comments;
- unwanted advances;
- inappropriate touching;
- threats;
- intimidation;
- offensive messages or images;
- stalking;
- repeated unwanted communication; and
- conduct intended to humiliate another participant.

A person's position, playing ability, selection status or importance to a team does not exempt that person from this Policy.

The same standards apply to youth athletes, adult athletes, professional players, coaches and Academy leadership.

6. ANTI-BULLYING AND HAZING

Bullying and hazing are prohibited.

This includes:

- physical bullying;
- verbal abuse;
- cyberbullying;
- exclusion intended to humiliate;
- threats;
- repeated ridicule;
- initiation rituals;
- forcing athletes to perform humiliating activities;
- inappropriate initiation of new players;
- taking or hiding personal property; and
- using seniority or playing status to intimidate another athlete.

Team traditions must be positive, voluntary and respectful.

7. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND INCLUSION

Seattle Thunderbolts Cricket Academy seeks to provide an inclusive environment.

Discrimination or harassment based on legally protected characteristics is prohibited.

Selection and cricket decisions may legitimately consider factors including:

- age-group eligibility;
- skill;
- performance;
- fitness;
- attendance;
- team balance;
- position;

- competition requirements;
- conduct; and
- commitment.

However, decisions must not be based on unlawful discrimination.

The Academy is committed to creating an environment in which **girls and women have the same right to safety, dignity and respect as boys and men.**

8. COACH AND STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

Every coach, employee, contractor and volunteer must:

- place athlete welfare ahead of winning;
- treat athletes respectfully;
- maintain appropriate adult-athlete boundaries;
- avoid humiliating or degrading athletes;
- refrain from sexual or romantic relationships prohibited by Academy policy or applicable law;
- never request inappropriate photographs or messages;
- use appropriate physical contact;
- avoid favoritism based on personal relationships;
- comply with Academy safeguarding procedures;
- report serious safeguarding concerns;
- protect confidential athlete information;
- avoid coaching while impaired by alcohol or drugs; and
- cooperate with Academy investigations.

Coaches have significant authority over athletes and must never misuse that authority.

9. YOUTH AND ADULT ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT

Athletes representing Seattle Thunderbolts are expected to:

- respect teammates;
- respect coaches;
- respect opponents;
- respect officials and umpires;
- respect facilities and equipment;
- compete fairly;
- follow team rules;
- refrain from bullying and harassment;
- refrain from fighting;
- refrain from discriminatory or abusive language;
- maintain appropriate behavior during travel;
- follow tournament and league rules; and
- conduct themselves appropriately while representing Thunderbolts.

Adult athletes training or competing alongside Minor Athletes must also follow the Academy's Minor Athlete safeguarding requirements.

Being an athlete does not exempt an adult from safeguarding responsibilities when interacting with minors.

10. PARENT AND SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Parents and spectators are essential partners in creating a positive environment.

Parents and spectators must:

- treat athletes, coaches, officials and other parents respectfully;
- refrain from abusive sideline behavior;
- not threaten or intimidate umpires;
- avoid coaching players from the sidelines unless authorized;
- raise concerns through appropriate Academy channels;
- refrain from publicly humiliating athletes;
- comply with facility and tournament rules; and
- respect coaching and selection processes.

Disagreement with a selection or coaching decision does not justify harassment of coaches, selectors, athletes or other parents.

Serious or repeated violations may result in restrictions on attendance at Academy activities.

11. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH MINORS

Communications between coaches/staff and Minor Athletes must remain professional and related to legitimate Academy activities.

Whenever reasonably practicable, communications should be **open and transparent**.

For Minor Athletes, coaches should communicate through:

- team communication platforms;
- group text/WhatsApp groups;
- email with a parent/guardian or another authorized adult included; or
- other Academy-approved communication systems.

Coaches should not engage Minor Athletes in secret, disappearing or inappropriate private communications.

Social Media

Coaches and staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries on social media.

Sexual, romantic or otherwise inappropriate direct messages with Minor Athletes are prohibited.

A parent/guardian may request that Academy personnel communicate directly with the parent rather than the Minor Athlete.

12. PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND MEDIA

The Academy may photograph or record practices, matches, tournaments and events for:

- coaching analysis;
- livestreaming;
- Academy promotion;
- websites;
- social media;
- sponsorship;

- tournament coverage; and
- cricket-development purposes,

subject to applicable consent requirements.

Photography or video is prohibited in bathrooms, showers and private changing areas.

No participant may create, possess, request or distribute inappropriate images of another athlete.

Parents should inform the Academy of specific media restrictions involving their child.

13. LOCKER ROOMS AND CHANGING AREAS

Athletes must be provided reasonable privacy when changing.

Adults should avoid unnecessary presence in youth changing areas.

Coaches should not change or shower with Minor Athletes.

Photography and video recording in bathrooms, showers and changing areas are prohibited.

Where teams contain both minors and adults, reasonable arrangements should be made to preserve privacy and appropriate separation.

14. LOCAL TOURNAMENTS AND MATCHES

This Policy remains fully applicable during all Academy tournaments and matches.

This includes tournaments:

- organized by Thunderbolts;
- hosted at Thunderbolts facilities;
- hosted by another organization;
- elsewhere in Washington;

- elsewhere in the United States; and
- internationally.

Athletes remain subject to the Academy Code of Conduct while representing Thunderbolts.

Coaches and team managers should identify the responsible adult/team manager for each youth team participating in an event.

15. TRANSPORTATION OF MINOR ATHLETES

Parents/guardians are ordinarily responsible for arranging transportation of Minor Athletes unless transportation is organized or authorized by the Academy.

For Academy-organized transportation, the Academy will seek to avoid an unrelated adult transporting a single Minor Athlete alone.

Preferred arrangements include:

- team buses or vans;
- multiple athletes traveling together;
- multiple authorized adults present; or
- parent/guardian transportation.

One-on-one transportation by an unrelated coach or other adult should occur only when reasonably necessary and with appropriate parent/guardian authorization, except in an emergency.

Seatbelt, vehicle safety and applicable licensing requirements must be followed.

16. DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TEAM TRAVEL

Thunderbolts teams may travel throughout Washington, across the United States and internationally.

All Academy policies remain in effect throughout Academy-sponsored travel.

Before youth overnight travel, the Academy should provide parents with appropriate information regarding:

- destination;
- itinerary;
- tournament;
- accommodations;
- transportation;
- responsible coaches/team managers;
- emergency contacts; and
- supervision arrangements.

Parents/guardians must provide required travel authorization for Minor Athletes.

International travel may require passports, visas, medical information, parental travel authorization and other documentation.

17. HOTEL AND OVERNIGHT LODGING

Adult coaches, staff and volunteers generally must **not share a hotel room or sleeping arrangement with an unrelated Minor Athlete.**

Reasonable age-appropriate and gender/privacy-sensitive rooming arrangements should be used for youth teams.

Room checks involving Minor Athletes should ordinarily involve two authorized adults where reasonably practicable.

Coaches should not enter a Minor Athlete's hotel room alone except for an emergency or other unavoidable safety situation.

Team meetings should be held in:

- meeting rooms;
- hotel common areas;
- team spaces; or
- other observable locations.

The same safeguarding expectations apply whether travel involves boys' teams, girls' teams or mixed delegations.

18. ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND TOBACCO

Minor Athletes may not possess or consume alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, vaping products or other prohibited substances during Academy activities.

Adults must not provide these substances to minors.

Adults participating in Academy activities must not become impaired while responsible for supervising Minor Athletes.

Adult social activities during tournaments or travel must never compromise athlete supervision or safety.

19. HEALTH, INJURY AND EMERGENCY SAFETY

Athlete health takes priority over participation.

Coaches should respond appropriately to:

- head injuries and suspected concussion;
- heat illness;
- dehydration;
- serious cricket-ball impact injuries;
- fractures;
- cardiac emergencies;
- allergic reactions;
- severe weather;
- lightning;
- unsafe playing surfaces; and
- other medical emergencies.

A coach must not pressure an athlete to continue playing when doing so presents an unreasonable health or safety risk.

Emergency services should be contacted when appropriate.

20. REPORTING A SAFETY OR CONDUCT CONCERN

Athletes, parents, coaches, volunteers and staff are encouraged to report concerns involving:

- child abuse;
- sexual misconduct;
- harassment;
- bullying;
- discrimination;
- retaliation;
- inappropriate coach-athlete behavior;
- physical abuse;
- unsafe travel arrangements; or
- serious violations of this Policy.

Reports may be made to:

Seattle Thunderbolts Safeguarding Officer: _Phani Chitneni_____

Email: phani.chitneni@gmail.com_____

Telephone: _____425-444-6046_____

Reports involving an immediate threat to a person's safety should be reported to emergency services or appropriate law enforcement.

An internal report to Thunderbolts does **not** replace any legal obligation to report suspected child abuse or other conduct to law enforcement, child-protection authorities or another authority.

21. NO RETALIATION

Retaliation against a person who in good faith:

- reports a concern;
- participates in an investigation;
- supports an athlete making a report; or
- raises an athlete-safety issue

is prohibited.

Retaliation itself constitutes a violation of this Policy.

Knowingly making a deliberately false allegation may also result in disciplinary action. A report that cannot ultimately be substantiated is **not**, by itself, a false report.

22. RESPONSE TO SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS

When the Academy receives a serious safeguarding allegation, it may take immediate protective measures before an investigation is completed.

Depending upon the circumstances, measures may include:

- separating individuals;
- changing coaching assignments;
- restricting communications;
- removing an adult from youth activities;
- temporary suspension;
- restricting facility access;
- contacting parents/guardians;
- contacting tournament or governing authorities; or
- reporting matters to appropriate governmental authorities.

Protective action is not necessarily a finding that misconduct occurred.

23. INVESTIGATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The Academy will seek to address reported violations promptly and fairly.

Information will be shared only with individuals who reasonably need the information for athlete safety, investigation, legal compliance or disciplinary purposes.

The Academy cannot promise absolute confidentiality where disclosure is necessary to protect an athlete or comply with law.

Individuals involved in an investigation are expected to cooperate and provide truthful information.

24. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Violations may result in action including:

- verbal warning;
- written warning;
- parent conference;
- behavioral agreement;
- removal from a practice or match;
- suspension;
- tournament removal;
- travel restrictions;
- loss of coaching responsibilities;
- termination of employment or contract;
- removal from the Academy;
- permanent prohibition from Academy activities; or
- referral to governing bodies or governmental authorities.

Discipline will depend upon the seriousness and circumstances of the conduct.

Serious athlete-safety violations may result in immediate suspension or removal.

25. BACKGROUND SCREENING AND TRAINING

The Academy may require appropriate background screening for coaches, staff, contractors and volunteers who have regular access to Minor Athletes.

Individuals working regularly with youth athletes may also be required to complete athlete-safety, abuse-prevention or other safeguarding education designated by the Academy.

Failure to complete required screening or training may result in restriction from youth activities.

26. ADULT ATHLETES

Adult athletes are entitled to a safe environment as well.

Harassment, sexual misconduct, bullying, discrimination, violence and retaliation involving adult participants are prohibited.

The existence of a consensual relationship between adults does not excuse:

- harassment;
- abuse of coaching authority;
- coercion;
- favoritism affecting team decisions;
- retaliation; or
- conduct creating an unsafe environment.

Adults participating in youth programs have an additional responsibility to model appropriate behavior.

27. SELECTION AND PERFORMANCE DECISIONS

Nothing in this Policy prevents coaches and selectors from making legitimate cricket decisions.

Coaches may determine:

- team selection;
- playing XI;
- batting order;
- bowling opportunities;
- wicketkeeping assignments;
- captaincy;
- tournament rosters;
- playing time;
- training groups; and

- performance pathways

based upon legitimate cricket and team considerations.

Athletes and parents may respectfully raise concerns, but disagreement with a cricket decision does not automatically constitute harassment or discrimination.

28. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Athlete safety is everyone's responsibility.

Every Thunderbolts coach, athlete, parent, volunteer and administrator contributes to the culture of the Academy.

Everyone is encouraged to speak up when something appears unsafe or inconsistent with these standards.

If you see something concerning, report it.

29. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Participation in Seattle Thunderbolts Cricket Academy programs constitutes an expectation that participants will comply with applicable Academy policies.

The Academy may require annual written or electronic acknowledgement from:

- coaches;
- employees;
- contractors;
- volunteers;
- adult athletes;
- Minor Athletes where age appropriate; and
- parents/guardians.

Participant/Parent Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received, reviewed and agree to comply with the Seattle Thunderbolts Cricket Academy Athlete Safety, Safeguarding, Anti-Harassment & Code of Conduct Policy.

Athlete Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (if athlete is under 18): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

SEATTLE THUNDERBOLTS CRICKET ACADEMY

Safety • Respect • Inclusion • Development • Excellence

Protect the athlete. Respect the game. Represent the Thunderbolts.