



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFETY IN COMPETITIVE ATHLETICS AND SPORT CLUBS

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1. Scope
  - a. This document provides guidance for conducting safe and successful:
    - 1) High school summer league teams
    - 2) Interscholastic middle school teams

- 3) All intramural teams
  - 4) Powder Puff Football
    - a) Refer to Best Practices for Safety in Powder Puff Football  
<http://www.vcssfa.org/RiskControl/BestPractices/tabid/2068/Default.aspx>
  - 5) Competitive sport club teams
  - b. Exceptions:
    - 1) Interscholastic high school teams are to be governed by the rules, regulations, and guidelines set by the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF), Southern Section
    - 2) Physical Education classes that are conducted on campus
      - a) Risk management and safety for cheerleading and/or spirit squads are addressed in the VCSSFA “Best Practices for Safety in Cheerleading.”
2. Definitions
- a. Interscholastic Athletics: those policies, programs, and activities that are formulated or executed in conjunction with, or in contemplation of, athletic contests between two or more schools, either public or private. (California *Education Code*, section 35179)
  - b. CIF-approved sports
    - 1) Those sports for which member high schools have mutually adopted rules relating to interscholastic athletics (grades 9 through 12), and established agreed upon minimum standards for certain aspects of the interscholastic athletic program:
 

Badminton	Lacrosse
Baseball	Skiing and snow boarding
Basketball	Soccer
Competitive Cheer	Softball
Cheerleading*	Swimming and diving
Cross-country	Tennis
Dance*	Track and field
Field hockey	Volleyball
Football	Water polo
Golf	Wrestling
Gymnastics	
- \* Sideline Cheerleading and Dance are not approved interscholastic sports in the CIF Southern Section. Because cheerleading is an integral part of sports at the high school level, it is grouped with CIF sports for liability coverage purposes. The VCSSFA Guidelines for cheerleaders should be followed as if produced by CIF for CIF-approved sports.

- 2) These sports are covered under the VCSSFA Liability Program with first dollar coverage.
    - a) These sports may be played by any student in Kindergarten and grades 1 through 12.
  - c. High School Summer League Teams
    - 1) Off-season extensions of interscholastic high school teams that:
      - a) have formal, scheduled practices,
      - b) host other schools for games and/or competitions
      - c) travel to other schools for games and/or competitions
  - d. High School Summer “Club” Teams
    - 1) Off-season extensions of interscholastic high school teams that:
      - a) Are affiliated with a national or regional sponsoring organization.
      - b) host other schools for games and/or competitions
      - c) travel to other schools for games and/or competitions
  - e. Interscholastic Middle School Teams
    - 1) Teams that travel to other schools to compete
    - 2) Includes middle/intermediate/junior high school students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.
    - 3) CIF-approved sports are covered under the VCSSFA Liability Program with first dollar coverage.
    - 4) Non-CIF-approved sports fall under the definition of sports clubs.
  - f. Intramural Teams
    - 1) Teams that compete against other teams from the same school
    - 2) Includes students in the Kindergarten through twelfth grades.
    - 3) CIF-approved sports are covered under the VCSSFA Liability Program with first dollar coverage.
    - 4) Non-CIF-approved sports fall under the definition of sports clubs.
  - g. A sport club is a club that provides instructional, competitive, recreational activities and leadership opportunities for students. Sports clubs should develop interests and skills of individuals in sports that are not usually found in a school setting.
3. Fees and Donations
    - a. A student enrolled in a school shall not be required to pay any fee, deposit, or other charge not specifically authorized by law. (California Code of Regulations, Title 5, section 350)

- b. Fees are allowed for field trips in connection with athletic activities, so long as no student is prevented because of lack of funds.
  - c. Donations
    - 1) Donations are allowed
    - 2) Athletic programs cannot imply that the donation is mandatory or that a student will not be allowed to play or will be punished in any way if he or she does not meet a fundraising goal.
    - 3) It is permissible to say that the team is trying to raise a specific amount by a certain date but avoid any language like “we expect each family’s donation to be submitted by October 10.”
    - 4) Never establish a lesser donation amount if funds are received prior to a certain date.
    - 5) Never use any statements or actions that exert explicit or implicit pressure on students or parents to make a donation.
    - 6) If a family does not make a donation, that family must not be subject to inquiry as to why.
4. Coaching and Supervision
- a. All coaches and/or supervisors must be at least 21 years of age.
  - b. Coaches are to demonstrate knowledge and competency in the following areas:
    - 1) Care and prevention of athletic injuries, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid, including, but not limited to, a basic understanding of the signs and symptoms of concussions and heat illness and the appropriate response to concussions and heat illness;
    - 2) Coaching techniques;
    - 3) Rules and regulations in the athletic activity being coached;
    - 4) Child or adolescent psychology.
  - c. Additional requirements for coaches who are not full-time employees
    - 1) Background checks to determine any offenses referenced in Education Code sections 44010, 44011, or 44424;
    - 2) Tuberculosis testing, every four (4) years;
    - 3) Armatus Molestation Prevention training;
    - 4) Agree to follow all applicable school board policies;
    - 5) Agree to and sign a “Code of Ethical Conduct;”
    - 6) Completion of a Volunteer form, as applicable.

- d. Coaches and/or supervisors attend practice and/or competition to supervise students.
- e. Refer to Recommendations for Coaching Standards for more information

<http://www.vcssfa.org/Risk-Management/Best-Practices/Athletics>

## 5. Schedule

- a. Competitions, practices, and fundraising events must be scheduled and approved by the school site administrator prior to the beginning of the season.
  - 1) Fundraising events that are not sponsored by established parent-teacher/faculty organizations, such as PTA and PFO, or established booster clubs, are to follow district board policy and/or Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) guidelines for fundraising events found in Chapter 8 of the current *Associated Student Body Accounting Manual, Desk Reference and Fraud Prevention Guide*.
    - a) Found at: [http://www.fcmat.org/stories/storyReader\\$911](http://www.fcmat.org/stories/storyReader$911)
- b. A written schedule of competitions, meetings, and/or team practices must be attached to the field trip form. The school site administrator must approve additions to the schedule.
- c. Team practice does not begin until an adequate number of adult coaches and/or supervisors are present. If an insufficient number of adult coaches and/or supervisors are available, practice is to be cancelled.
- d. Ad hoc practices, competitions, and fundraising events. Practice sessions, competitions and/or fundraising events not on the approved schedule are not school-sanctioned.
  - 1) The coach, supervisor, and/or committee organizing practices, competitions, and fundraising events that are not on the approved schedule may not be covered by the district liability insurance program.

## 6. Personal Insurance

- a. Each participant must show proof of personal medical and/or accident insurance.
- b. Information regarding personal accident insurance will be available through the district.

## 7. Required Forms:

- a. All applicable forms are to be signed and returned by the athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian annually before the athlete's initiating try-out, practice, or competition.
  - 1) Wet signatures on hard copies are preferred.
  - 2) All forms that are reviewed and acknowledged via an internet website are to be dated and stored by the school and/or district as an electric or hard copy.
    - a) If a claim is filed against the district, these forms will correspond with those reviewed and acknowledged for the respective school year.

b. District Forms

- 1) Field Trip/Excursion Authorization and Medical Treatment Authorization with attached practice schedule and competition schedule
- 2) All sport team and sport club participants must submit a fully completed and signed “Voluntary Sports/Athletic Event or Activity, Informed Consent and Liability Release, Acknowledgment and Assumption of Potential Risk” form
- 3) Physical Examination (Required for CIF sports, recommended for all others)
- 4) Concussion information (Required for all sports)
- 5) Steroid Information Sheet and Acknowledgement (Required for CIF sports)
- 6) Sudden Cardiac Arrest Information (Required for all sports)
- 7) Heat Illness Information (Required for CIF sports, recommended for all others)
- 8) Opioids Information (Required for all sports)
- 9) School Athletics Physical Contact Acknowledgement (Recommended)
- 10) Readmission to School of Student with Temporary Disability or Injury (Recommended)
- 11) Personal Vehicle Use (coaches, supervisors, and chaperones) (Recommended)
- 12) Student Transportation Permission (Recommended)

c. Accident Reports

- 1) VCSSFA “Report of Personal Accident” Form VCSS SFA – 1006 must be completed after any injury arising out of or in the course of travel to, or participation in Competitive Team Sport Clubs practice and/or competition.
- 2) All accident reports must be completed thoroughly, accurately, and submitted to the district office within 24 hours of the incident.

d. Coaches of sport clubs are responsible for delivery of forms to the appropriate Interscholastic League, Federation, Association, or program office.

Students must have the following forms on record with the appropriate Interscholastic League, Federation, Association, or program. Students need to submit these forms to their coaches:

- 1) Student Application
- 2) Liability Waiver
- 3) Emergency Medical Release
- 4) All forms listed in paragraph c.

e. Document Retention

- 1) Forms for high school athletes are to be stored for the duration of high school plus two (2) years.

- 2) Forms for elementary or middle school athletes are to be stored for the duration of participation and follow the student to the school at the next level.
    - a) Exception: for student athletes who move out of the district, the forms are to be stored for two (2) years after the student moves.
8. Required Posting
- a. Any school that offers competitive athletics must publicly post the following information on the school internet website:
    - 1) The total enrollment of the school, classified by gender;
    - 2) The number of students enrolled at the school who participate in competitive athletics, classified by gender;
    - 3) The number of boys' and girls' teams, classified by sport and by competition level
  - b. Posted data must reflect the total number of players on a team roster on the official first day of competition
  - c. The information must be publicly available:
    - 1) On the school's Internet Web site, or
    - 2) If the school does not maintain an Internet Web site, by submitting the information to its school district or, for a charter school, to its charter operator. The school district or charter operator shall post the information on its Internet Web site, and the information shall be disaggregated by school site
  - d. The data must be retained by the school for at least three (3) years after the information is posted.
  - e. For posting purposes, "competitive athletics" means sports where the activity has coaches, a governing organization, and practices, and competes during a defined season, and has competition as its primary goal.
  - f. Example Language:
    - 1) Refer to form on the VCSSFA Title IX web page or CIF reporting form.
      - a) Contact VCSSFA for password.
    - 2) "[Name of School or District] does not offer competitive athletics as that term is defined by Education Code Section 221.9 (e)."
9. Concussion Management
- a. Coaches are to be trained in a basic understanding of the signs and symptoms of concussions and the appropriate response to concussions. (California *Education Code* (Ed Code), Section 35179.1(b)(6))
  - b. A concussion and head injury information sheet shall be signed and returned by the athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian annually before the athlete's initiating practice or competition. (Ed Code, §49475(a)(2))

- c. An athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in an athletic activity shall be immediately removed from the activity for the remainder of the day, and shall not be permitted to return to the activity until he or she is evaluated by a licensed health care provider, trained in the management of concussions, acting within the scope of his or her practice. The athlete shall not be permitted to return to the activity until he or she receives written clearance to return to the activity from that licensed health care provider. (Ed Code, §49475(a)(1))
  - 1) For CIF sports, the evaluation is limited to a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO).
- d. Refer to Best Practices for Concussion Management for more information  
<http://www.vcssfa.org/Risk-Management/Best-Practices/Athletics>

#### 10. Sudden Cardiac Arrest

- a. Coaches are to complete a sudden cardiac arrest training course and retake the training course every two years thereafter. (Ed Code, Section 33479.6(a))
  - 1) A coach shall not be eligible to coach until the coach completes the sudden cardiac arrest training course. (Ed Code, Section 33479.6(b))
- b. A sudden cardiac arrest information sheet shall be signed and returned by the athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian annually before the athlete's initiating practice or competition. (Ed Code, Section 33479.4)
- c. Removal from activity (Ed Code, Section 33479.5)
  - 1) An athlete who passes out or faints while participating in or immediately following an athletic activity, or who is known to have passed out or fainted while participating in or immediately following an athletic activity, shall be removed from participation at that time by the athletic director, coach, athletic trainer, or authorized person
  - 2) An athlete who exhibits any of the other symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest, during an athletic activity, may be removed from participation by an athletic trainer or authorized person if the athletic trainer or authorized person reasonably believes that the symptoms are cardiac related. In the absence of an athletic trainer or authorized person, any coach who observes any of the symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest shall notify the parent or guardian of the pupil so that the parent or guardian can determine what treatment, if any, the pupil should seek
  - 3) An athlete who is removed from play under this section shall not be permitted to return to participate in an athletic activity until the pupil is evaluated and cleared to return to participate in writing by a physician and surgeon, or a nurse practitioner or physician assistant practicing in accordance with standardized procedures or protocols developed by the supervising physician and surgeon and the nurse practitioner or physician assistant, as applicable.
    - a) For CIF sports, the evaluation is limited to a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO).



- d. Refer to Best Practices for Sudden Cardiac Arrest for more information  
<http://www.vcssfa.org/Risk-Management/Best-Practices/Athletics>
11. Heat Illness Protocol (Required for CIF sports and recommended for all other sports)
    - a. Coaches are to be trained in a basic understanding of the signs and symptoms of Heat Illness. (Ed Code), Section 35179.1(b)(6))
    - b. On a yearly basis, a heat illness information sheet shall be signed and returned by the athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian annually before the athlete's initiating practice or competition. (CIF Bylaw 503, K)
    - c. Removal from activity (CIF Bylaw 503, K)
      - 1) An athlete who exhibits signs of heat illness while participating in or immediately following an athletic activity, shall be removed immediately from participation at that time by the athletic director, coach, athletic trainer, or authorized person
      - 2) An athlete who is removed from play after displaying signs and symptoms associated with heat illness may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider and receives written clearance to return to play from that health care provider.
        - a) For CIF sports, the evaluation is limited to a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO).
  12. Return from Injury Or Illness
    - a. An athlete who suffers a significant injury or illness during an athletic activity should be immediately removed from the activity for the remainder of the day, and should not be permitted to return to the activity until he or she is evaluated by a licensed health care provider
      - 1) Broken bone(s);
      - 2) Severe joint sprain, requiring a splint or cast;
      - 3) Concussion;
      - 4) Seizure;
      - 5) Heat exhaustion and/or heat stroke.
    - b. The athlete should not be permitted to return to the activity until he or she receives written clearance and release to return to the activity from a licensed health care provider.
      - 1) Readmission to School of Student with Temporary Disability or Injury form
  13. Transportation
    - a. Refer to "Best Practices for Student Activity Transportation."  
<http://www.vcssfa.org/RiskControl/BestPractices/tabid/2068/Default.aspx>

14. Water Sports
  - a. One (1) Adult coach and/or supervisor per ten (10) students
  - b. Pair every club member with another, a “buddy,” in the same ability group. Buddies check in and out of the water area together. Emphasize that each buddy lifeguards his/her buddy. Buddies are to maintain visual contact as much as possible. Buddies are to check with each other before commencing activities on the water.
  
15. Competitive Team Sport Clubs
  - a. VCSSFA Coverage
    - 1) Some competitive sport clubs are excluded from the VCSSFA Liability Coverage Program, (See Appendix A for a list of excluded sport clubs)
  - b. Deductibles
    - 1) See Appendix A for a list of sport clubs deductibles
  - c. All Competitive Team Sport Clubs that compete against other schools are encouraged to be enrolled in an appropriate Interscholastic League, Federation, Association, or program, and are encouraged to purchase insurance from that program.
    - 1) A partial list of Interscholastic Leagues, Federations, Associations, or programs is included in ~~the~~ Appendix B.
    - 2) All Competitive Team Sport Clubs are to follow any and all safety and operating guidelines published by the Leagues, Federations, Associations, or program. The safety and operating guidelines are incorporated by reference as mandatory.
  - d. Participation in Competitive Team Sport Clubs will be limited to high schools and middle/intermediate/junior high schools only. Elementary schools are not to participate.
    - 1) Students must be enrolled at the school sponsoring the Competitive Team Sport Clubs.
  - e. High School Summer “Club” Teams
    - 1) Summer “Club” teams sponsored by a regional or national organization are not considered school teams.
    - 2) Coaches are required to make facility use arrangement through the District Office, for any out of season activity that occurs outside of the school day, and is not considered a school function.
    - 3) Arrangement made through the District Office for out-of-season activities will be subject to the use of facility conditions for outside groups

## f. Sports Club Renewal

- 1) All Competitive Team Sport Clubs are encouraged to renew their sport club status at the beginning of each academic year. Prior to approval, all required forms must be completed.
- 2) Competitive Team Sport Clubs are not eligible to meet, practice, or compete until after approval from the site administrator.

## 16. Hazardous Weather (as applicable)

## a. Review weather conditions and information prior to each practice and/or competition and be aware of any warning. Evaluate the weather and event:

- 1) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)  
805-278-0760
- 2) National Weather Service  
805-988-6610

## b. Heat

- 1) Even being out for short periods of time in high temperatures can cause serious health problems.
- 2) Monitor activities and time in the sun to lower the risk for heat-related illness.
- 3) If outside in hot weather for most of the day make an effort to drink more fluids.
- 4) Avoid beverages and drinks high in sugar, and stay away from caffeinated and carbonated beverages.
- 5) Whatever the outdoor activity, have water on hand to decrease the risk of dehydration.

## c. Sun protection

- 1) Competitive Team Sport Clubs members are to use waterproof sun block with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 30 or higher.
- 2) Canopies and/or umbrellas are also recommended to provide protection from the sun.

## d. Thunderstorm

- 1) Upon seeing lightning or hearing thunder, immediately move all students and staff indoors. Do not wait for the rain to begin falling.
- 2) While indoors, stay away from windows and doors; refrain from using telephones, electrical appliances, computers, or plumbing fixtures; and do not lie on concrete floors or lean against reinforced masonry walls.
- 3) Remain indoors for at least 30 minutes after the last lightning is observed or the last thunder is heard.

- 4) For additional information, refer to Thunderstorm Safety Information Sheet.  
<http://www.vcssfa.org/RiskControl/InformationSheets.aspx>
- e. Ocean Conditions
  - 1) Practice is to be discontinued and/or cancelled if waves higher than five (5) feet (surf and sailing clubs)

## APPENDIX A

### SPORT CLUBS DEDUCTIBLES AND EXCLUSIONS

Non-CIF Competitive Sport Clubs with a \$100,000 deductible.

All-terrain vehicles racing (\$100,000 deductible)	Kite boarding (\$100,000 deductible)
Bungee jumping (\$100,000 deductible)	Motorized go-carts racing (\$100,000 deductible)
Bungee-related activities – other (\$100,000 deductible)	Motorcycles/Motorbikes racing (\$100,000 deductible)
Drag Racing (\$100,000 deductible)	Parasailing (\$100,000 deductible)
Four-wheel drive racing (\$100,000 deductible)	Road rallies (\$100,000 deductible)
Hang gliding/ultra lights (\$100,000 deductible)	Rodeo (\$100,000 deductible)
	Scuba diving (\$100,000 deductible)
	Skydiving (\$100,000 deductible)
	Sky surfing (\$100,000 deductible)

Non-CIF Competitive Sport Clubs excluded from VCSSFA Liability Coverage Program.

Manned Aircraft, any type of flying	Pistol, rifle and shot gun shooting* (unlawful within a school zone)
Hot air ballooning	

\* Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) will have VCSSFA coverage for target shooting with air soft, BB, and/or .177 caliber pellet guns only. These programs will be subject to a VCSSFA annual inspection.

## APPENDIX B

### LEAGUES, ASSOCIATIONS, FEDERATIONS, ETC

#### **Equestrian Clubs**

Interscholastic Equestrian League (IEL)  
11684 Ventura Blvd. #751  
Studio City, CA 91604  
[www.theiel.org](http://www.theiel.org)

#### **Fencing Clubs**

United States Fencing Association  
One Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
Telephone: 719-866-4511  
Fax: 719-632-5737  
Email: [info@USFencing.org](mailto:info@USFencing.org)  
<http://www.usfencing.org/>

#### **Hockey Clubs**

Anaheim Ducks High School Hockey League  
<https://www.adhshl.com/>

LA Kings High School League  
Telephone: 424-405-0126  
lakleague.com

#### **Sailing Clubs**

Pacific Coast Interscholastic Sailing Association (PCISA)  
2812 Canon Street  
San Diego, CA 92106  
Phone: 619-222-0252  
Fax: 619-222-0252  
[info@hssailing.org](mailto:info@hssailing.org)  
<https://hssailing.org>

### **Surf Clubs**

National Scholastic Surfing Association  
PO Box 495  
Huntington Beach, CA 9264809

Tel. 714-378-0899  
Fax 714-964-5232  
[gclifford@nssa.org](mailto:gclifford@nssa.org)  
<http://www.nssa.org/>

or

Scholastic Surf Series  
PO Box 996  
Cardiff, CA 92007  
760-518-2727  
[info@surfsss.org](mailto:info@surfsss.org)  
<http://www.surfsss.org/>

### **Swimming**

USA Swimming  
1 Olympic Plaza  
Colorado Springs, CO 80909  
719-866-4578  
[info@usaswimming.org](mailto:info@usaswimming.org)  
<https://www.usaswimming.org/>

### **Water Polo**

USA Water Polo  
6 Morgan, Suite 150  
Irvine, CA 92618  
714-500-5445  
[https://usawaterpolo.org/sb\\_output.aspx?form=4&path=mission](https://usawaterpolo.org/sb_output.aspx?form=4&path=mission)  
<https://usawaterpolo.org/index.aspx>