

Parents, spectators, coaches, and referees have responsibilities and obligations to keep our soccer club a great experience for all. As a parent, you play a special role in contributing to the needs and development of youngsters. Through your encouragement and good example, you can help assure that all the children learn good sportsmanship and self-discipline. In team sports, young people learn to work together, to sacrifice for the good of the team, to enjoy winning and deal appropriately with defeat - all while becoming physically fit and healthy. Most important of all, they are supposed to have fun. Therefore, the Vermilion Soccer Club (VSC) has developed the following:

## **VERMILION SOCCER CLUB PARENT'S CODE :**

### **SUPPORT YOUR CHILD**

Supporting your child by giving encouragement and showing interest in their team is very important. Help your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship in every game. Teach your child that hard work and an honest effort are often more important than victory - that way your child will always be a winner despite the outcome of the game!

### **ALWAYS BE POSITIVE**

Parents serve as role models for their children. Become aware of this and work to be a positive role model. Applaud good plays by your child's team as well as good plays by the opposing team. Cheer positively for the things you like and encourage your team. Have fun! Never put down the other team or any of the players on either team. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from youth sports activities.

### **REMEMBER: YOUR CHILD WANTS TO HAVE FUN**

Remember that your child is the one playing soccer, not you. It's very important to let children establish their own goals - to play the game for themselves. Take care not to impose your own standards and goals on them. Don't put too heavy a burden on your child to win games. Surveys reveal that 72% of children would rather play for a losing team than ride the bench for a winning team.

### **REINFORCE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR**

Positive reinforcement is the best way to help your child achieve their goals and their natural fear of failure. Nobody likes to make mistakes. If your child does make one, remember it's all part of learning, so encourage your child's efforts and point out the good things your child accomplished.

### **DON'T BE A SIDELINE COACH**

Coaches are usually parents just like you. They volunteer their time to help make your child's youth soccer experience a positive one. They need your support, too. That means refraining from coaching from the sidelines. Spectators frequently yell instructions to the players - these instructions often contradict those of the coach and only confuse the players. As a volunteer organization, there's usually always an opportunity for you to take your interest in coaching or refereeing to the next level and become one yourself! Every year we have many new coaches. Each is volunteering to do a difficult job, and mistakes inevitably occur. Heckling the coach is totally unwarranted.

### **DON'T ABUSE REFEREES**

The Lorain County Soccer League (LCSL) provides all of the referees, dedicated youths and adults who are on the field during games to provide safety and fairness for our teams. We parents and coaches need to keep in mind how difficult it is to be a referee, especially if they are young. We lose many referees every year because of the harassment they receive from coaches and parents. The role of referee must be recognized and respected by the coach, the team and the parents. Youth referees must be given the same respect as the adult referees. The referee in a soccer match has complete authority over players and coaches from the moment that the referee enters the grounds to the time the referee leaves. Like all of us, referees will make mistakes. You are entitled to be disappointed when you think the referee is doing a poor job, but don't let these feelings interfere with the game. It is the coach's responsibility to contact the LCSL Referee Assignor if he or she feels a referee needs to improve on skills. Some points to remember:

- Referees are in charge of the game. Their decisions are final. Continual arguing with referees can result in disciplinary action.
- Coaches may be penalized for inappropriate behavior by parents, players, or spectators.
- Derogatory remarks or gestures to a referee or parent official are not allowed.
- Arguing with referees is not acceptable--Do not harass them.
- Their contribution is vital to our League.

Our referees, like all VSC officials and coaches, are volunteers, not professionals. While their decisions may not always be agreeable to all participants and spectators, they are final. No useful purpose is served by shouting disagreement or derogatory remarks. Referees can caution players (showing a yellow card) and dismiss players from the game (showing a red card) for misconduct. Referees can also caution and dismiss coaches, and can even terminate the game. Deliberate fouls, or abusive words and disrespect on the part of players, coaches, or spectators can lead to these actions. Every year we have many new referees and coaches. Each is volunteering to do a difficult job, and mistakes inevitably occur. Heckling the referees or the coach is totally unwarranted. Serious problems involving referees should be brought to the attention of the VSC President after the game.

**SUPPORT THE PROGRAM:**

Get involved. Volunteer. Help out with fundraisers, car-pool; anything to support the Club.

**BE YOU CHILD'S BEST FAN:**

Support your child unconditionally. Do not withdraw love when your child performs poorly. Your child should never have to perform to win your love.

**SUPPORT AND ROOT FOR ALL PLAYERS ON THE TEAM:**

Foster teamwork. Your child's teammates are not the enemy. When they are playing better than your child, your child now has a wonderful opportunity to learn.

**DO NOT BRIBE OR OFFER INCENTIVES:**

Your job is not to motivate. Leave this to the coaching staff. Bribes will distract your child from properly concentrating in practice and game situations.

**ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO TALK WITH THE COACHES:**

If your child is having difficulties in practice or games, or can't make a practice, etc., encourage them to speak directly to the coaches. This "responsibility taking" is a big part of becoming a big-time player. By handling the off-field tasks, your child is claiming ownership of all aspects of the game - preparation for as well as playing the game.

**UNDERSTAND AND DISPLAY APPROPRIATE GAME BEHAVIOR:**

Remember, your child's self esteem and game performance is at stake. Be supportive, cheer, and be appropriate. To perform to the best of their abilities, a player needs to focus on the parts of the game that they can control (fitness, positioning, decision making, skill, aggressiveness, what the game is presenting them). If they start focusing on what cannot be controlled (the condition of the field, the referee, the weather, the opponent, even the outcome of the game at times), the player will not play up to their ability. If your child hears a lot of people telling them what to do, or yelling at the referee, it diverts attention away from the task at hand.

**HELP YOUR CHILD KEEP THEIR PRIORITIES STRAIGHT:**

Help your child maintain a focus on schoolwork, relationships and the other things in life beside soccer. Also, if your child has made a commitment to soccer, help them fulfill this obligation.

**REALITY TEST:**

If your child has come off the field when the team has lost, but played to the best of their ability, help them see this as a "win". Remind your child that to focus on the "process" and not the "results". Enjoyment and satisfaction should be derived from "striving to win".

**KEEP SOCCER IN ITS PROPER PERSPECTIVE:**

Soccer should not be larger than life for you. If your child's performance produces strong emotions in you, suppress them. Remember your relationship will continue with your children long after their competitive soccer days are over. Keep your goals and needs separate from your child's experience.

**HAVE FUN:**

That is what we will be trying to do! We will try to challenge your child to reach past their "comfort level" and improve themselves as a player, and thus, a person. We will attempt to do this in environments that are fun, yet challenging.

Please remember, that the VSC only exists for the kids. No one within our organization, be it coaches, players, or Board members are getting paid for their time. We are doing all of this for the kids. If it isn't fun for you as a parent and for them as a player, no one will come back next time. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact myself or any member of the VSC Board of Trustees.

Wes Featherston  
President – Vermilion Soccer Club

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As a VSC parent I acknowledge and support the VSC Parents Code. By signing below I reinforce my commitment to uphold all of the parental obligations and responsibilities of the VSC Parents Code. Any documented reports of negative actions that are detrimental to the essence of this code will result in action being taken by the VSC Board. Progressive actions that can be taken are #1 – parent’s banishment from practices and games, then unfortunately #2 – removal of the child (children) from the Club. Failure to sign this document indicates my noncompliance with the code and will lead to appropriate action being taken by the VSC Board.

**Print Name**

**Phone No.**

**Signature**

**Date**

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