

# Wilson Lacrosse Club - Youth Handbook

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## 1. Introduction

### **Purpose of the Handbook:**

This handbook is designed to guide club members, providing clear expectations and guidelines to ensure a positive experience for everyone involved in Wilson Lacrosse Club's youth teams (grades 3-8). It serves as a resource for players, parents, and coaches, outlining our club's values, procedures, and standards.

### **Mission Statement:**

At Wilson Lacrosse Club, we are committed to creating a positive environment where both girls and boys can learn, practice, and play lacrosse. Our mission is to foster a love for the game by balancing fun, skill development, and teamwork. We believe in providing every student with the opportunity to grow both on and off the field, guided by coaches who are dedicated to nurturing each player's potential as athletes. Our goal is to ensure that every child has a rewarding experience that encourages them to continue playing and improving year after year.

### **Philosophy:**

The Wilson Lacrosse Club philosophy is built around three core principles:

- **Fun:** Lacrosse should be enjoyable for all players. Coaches are encouraged to create a fun and engaging environment where players look forward to practices and games.
- **Skill Development:** While having fun is important, we also focus on developing each player's lacrosse skills. This includes everything from basic techniques like passing and catching to more advanced strategies and positional play.
- **Sportsmanship:** We believe in the importance of teaching players to respect their teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials. Good sportsmanship is emphasized in every aspect of our program, from practice to game day.

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## 2. Code of Conduct

Wilson Lacrosse Club believes it's important for parents and coaches to teach young athletes the value of good sportsmanship. By following this code of conduct, we can keep the Wilson Lacrosse Club a positive and supportive place for everyone—players, parents, coaches, and officials alike.

### **For Players:**

1. I will respect my coaches, parents, teammates, opponents, and officials always.
2. I will treat everyone with kindness and fairness, no matter their race, gender, background, or ability.
3. I will accept decisions made by officials and coaches without arguing or showing frustration.

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4. I will show good sportsmanship by congratulating opponents after games, whether I win or lose.
5. I will not taunt, trash-talk, or be unsportsmanlike in any way.
6. I will use my equipment safely and follow the instructions my coaches give me.
7. I will not bully or harass anyone.
8. I will stay positive, even when things are tough, and support my teammates.
9. I will not use profanity.
10. I will not start fights or get into physical or verbal altercations with anyone, including teammates, coaches, parents, or officials.

### **For Parents:**

1. I will demonstrate respect, fairness, and self-control at all times, serving as a positive role model for my child and other youth athletes.
2. I will cheer for all players, not just my own child, and celebrate good play from both teams.
3. I will refrain from criticizing coaches, officials, or players, recognizing that everyone is doing their best.
4. I will ensure that my child understands and follows the principles of good sportsmanship.
5. I will use respectful and positive language when communicating with coaches.
6. I will avoid using profanity or engaging in arguments or confrontations with others at any sports event.
7. I will support the officials' decisions and avoid questioning their calls during games.
8. I will encourage my child to express themselves in a positive manner, focusing on effort and improvement.
9. I will not engage in physical altercations or aggressive behavior with anyone at a youth sports event.

### **Disciplinary Actions:**

In cases where a violation of the Club's Code of Conduct has occurred, disciplinary actions may be taken. These could range from verbal warnings to more severe consequences, such as suspension or expulsion from the club. The severity of the disciplinary action will depend on the nature and seriousness of the offense. Disciplinary actions will be assessed by the board's officers.

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## **3. Player Guidelines**

### **Participation and Registration**

To ensure that all players have a fair and enjoyable experience, Wilson Lacrosse Club has established specific guidelines for who can participate, how players are grouped, and the registration process. These guidelines help maintain a well-organized and competitive environment that supports the development of each player.

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- **Eligibility:**  
Participation in Wilson Lacrosse Club is open to students that attend Wilson School District schools and students living within the Wilson School District that attend virtual school or are homeschooled.
- **Age Groups:**  
Players are grouped by grade to ensure fair competition and appropriate skill development. Divisions are established in line with league rules. When appropriate to support a team need, a player may play up one level if requested by the team's coach and agreed to by the player's parents.
- **Registration Requirements:**  
All players must complete the registration process by the published deadlines. This includes submitting all required forms and paying the registration fee.

### **Equipment and Uniforms:**

Having the proper equipment is crucial for safety and performance. Each player is responsible to have the following:

- **Required Gear (Girls):**  
Players must have their own lacrosse stick, goggles, and appropriate footwear (cleats).
- **Required Gear (Boys):**  
Players must have their own lacrosse stick, helmet, mouthguard, chest protector, elbow pads, gloves, protective cup, and appropriate footwear (cleats).
- **Uniform Policy:**  
Each athlete is responsible to procure a Wilson Lacrosse uniform prior to the start of the season.
- **Loaner Equipment:**  
The club has a limited selection of loaner equipment available to borrow on a first-come first-served basis when needed.

### **Practice and Game Expectations:**

To get the most out of their lacrosse experience, players should approach practices and games with the right mindset:

- **Attendance:**  
Regular attendance at practices and games is expected. Consistent participation is key to team cohesion and individual development. Players who miss practice may see reduced playing time in games, as determined by the coach.
- **Effort and Attitude:**  
Players are expected to give their best effort during every practice and game. This includes being attentive during drills, actively participating, and maintaining a positive attitude, even when challenges arise.
- **Teamwork:**  
Lacrosse is a team sport, and success depends on players working together. We encourage players to support their teammates, communicate effectively on the field, and contribute to a positive team environment.

### 4. Parent and Guardian Guidelines

#### **Supporting Your Child:**

Parents play a key role in their child's development as an athlete. Encouragement, positive reinforcement, and a focus on effort and improvement are crucial. Parents should ensure their child attends practices and games on time and comes prepared with the necessary equipment.

#### **Communication Protocol:**

Effective communication between parents, coaches, and club leadership is essential for a smooth experience. TeamSnap is often the best way to communicate with coaches outside of practice and game times. Email addresses to contact club leadership are available on the club website: [WilsonLacrosse.com](http://WilsonLacrosse.com).

#### **Volunteer Opportunities:**

Wilson Lacrosse Club is a nonprofit organization. The success of it relies heavily on the involvement of parents and guardians. There are many ways to contribute, such as volunteering to help coach at younger levels (no experience required), running the scoreboard during games, or helping with the youth tournament. If you want to help, just reach out to a board member!

#### **Issue Resolution:**

If conflicts or concerns arise, parents should try to address them with their child's coach first. The club is committed to resolving issues fairly and efficiently, with an emphasis on open communication and understanding. If necessary, issues can be escalated to club leadership for further resolution.

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### 5. Team Management

#### **Coaching Staff**

- **Grades 3-4:**  
Our coaches are dedicated volunteers who are committed to ensuring each player's development and a positive experience. They work hard to help every child improve their skills while enjoying the game.
- **Grades 5-6:**  
To maintain fairness and avoid potential biases, we strive to appoint head coaches who do not have children on the team. These coaches are responsible for making roster assignments and playing time decisions. Parent volunteers play a supportive role, assisting with practice drills and managing sideline activities during games.
- **Grades 7-8:**  
At the middle school level, the coaching structure becomes more formalized. The head coach and assistant coaches are typically adults without children on the team, allowing

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them to focus on team-wide decisions. They handle all aspects of roster assignments and playing time. Parent volunteers continue to provide valuable support by assisting with drills and aiding coaches during games, as needed.

### Team Formation & Playing Time

#### Grades 3-6

- **Regular Season:**
  - Teams are created with the goal of balancing talent and experience for a fair and enjoyable experience for all players.
  - Players can generally expect to play at least half of each game.
- **Tournament Season / Play-offs:**
  - Teams are created with the goal of being competitive. This means some athletes may play more than others.
  - For tournaments that do not offer skill level-based divisions, teams will be created with the goal of balancing talent and experience.
  - For tournaments that offer skill level-based divisions, roster assignments will be made to make the team appropriately competitive at each level.

#### Grades 7-8

- At the middle school level, lacrosse becomes more competitive, and players are introduced to the concept of Junior Varsity (JV) and Varsity teams.
- Playing time at this level is earned based on a combination of skill, effort, and attitude.
- Coaches will make decisions regarding playing time with the goal of fielding the most competitive team possible, while also continuing to support player development.
- Not all players may receive equal playing time, especially in more competitive or varsity-level games.

### Timely Communication

Roster assignments will be communicated promptly.

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## 6. Safety and Risk Management

### Concussion Management:

Concussions are a serious concern in contact sports like lacrosse. Any player suspected of having a concussion will be removed from play immediately and will not be allowed to return until they have been cleared by a medical professional.

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### **Weather-Related Policies:**

Player safety extends to weather conditions as well. The club follows guidelines for postponing or canceling practices and games due to severe weather, including lightning, extreme cold, extreme heat, or other hazardous conditions. Decisions will be communicated to parents and players as early as possible.