MLS NEXT ACADEMY DIVISION
CODE OF CONDUCT
2026–2027

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I. OVERVIEW

MLS NEXT Academy Division is an elite youth soccer competition platform with the mission of providing world class training, development, education, and competition opportunities for select soccer players across the United States. MLS NEXT Academy Division values sportsmanship, fair play, skill development, and mutual respect among all Players, Coaches, officials, and spectators. This Code of Conduct has been established and adopted to ensure the guiding principles of MLS NEXT Academy Division are understood and followed by all Participants. This Code of Conduct applies to all Matches, MLS NEXT Academy Division Events, MLS NEXT Academy Division Competitions, or any other activity associated with MLS NEXT Academy Division.

II. CODE OF CONDUCT

a. General Principles

By seeking to participate in MLS NEXT Academy Division, each Participant will agree to conduct themselves in accordance with the following General Principles:

i. Each Participant agrees that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by all the information contained in the Rules and Policies applicable to them, which include, without limitation, the MLS NEXT Academy Division Rules and Regulations, the MLS NEXT Academy Division Safety and Wellbeing Policy, the MLS NEXT Academy Division Disciplinary Code, the MLS Privacy Policy, and any other rules, regulations, policies, guidelines, procedures, or directives of Operator and/or Player Development, L.L.C. ("PDev") and its affiliates.

ii. Each Participant agrees that they understand and will comply with the MLS NEXT Academy Division Code of Conduct and will refrain from taking any action that violates this Policy. Each Participant agrees that they will help foster a safe and welcoming environment for all Players, Coaches, parents, spectators, or any other Participant. Each Participant agrees that they will not take Offensive Action (as defined below in Section III), insult, make fun of, ridicule, or disparage, in any way, another Participant. If it is determined that any Participant failed to ensure a safe and welcoming environment, then such Participant may be subject to Sanctions, including, but not limited to, suspension from MLS NEXT Academy Division.

iii. Each Participant agrees that they are committed to facilitating a diverse and inclusive environment. Each Participant acknowledges that discrimination, offensive remarks, or adverse action of any kind arising out of or in connection with an individual's Protected Status (as defined in the MLS NEXT Academy Division Safety and Wellbeing Policy) will not be tolerated in MLS NEXT Academy Division, and a Participant will face serious and significant Sanctions, up to and including removal

from MLS NEXT Academy Division, in the event such actions are determined to have occurred.

iv. Each Participant hereby agrees that they will not engage in match fixing, betting, gambling, or any other form of wagering on Matches. Each Participant hereby agrees that they will not receive any gifts, meals, or other accommodations in connection with the result of an MLS NEXT Academy Division Event or Competition. If it is determined that a Participant participated in any of the aforementioned activities, then such Participant may incur serious and significant Sanctions, including, but not limited to, Lifetime Bans, and Fines.

v. Each Participant hereby agrees that they will not partake in any conduct that is illegal, violent, dangerous, irresponsible, or is otherwise detrimental to the reputation of Operator, PDev, MLS, or their affiliates. A Participant will face serious and significant Sanctions if found to have taken any action that undercuts public respect and support for the sport of soccer, Operator, PDev, MLS, or their affiliates.

vi. Each Participant hereby agrees they will report any wrongdoing or violations of this Policy, the MLS NEXT Academy Division Safety and Wellbeing Policy, or any Rule or Policy, to the appropriate governing bodies. If it is determined that a Participant failed to report such violations or wrongdoings, then such Participant may incur Sanctions.

b. Coach Code of Conduct

The Club will provide each Head Coach with copies of the MLS NEXT Academy Division Code of Conduct prior to the start of a Season. Each Head Coach is responsible for reviewing the Code of Conduct with their assistant coaches and Players and promoting their compliance with it. In addition, the Head Coach must make the Code of Conduct available to the parents of their Players and other Club spectators and take or facilitate immediate action to address non-compliance.

In addition to the General Principles above, each Coach will ensure that their conduct is that of a responsible coach. To satisfactorily meet these responsibilities, the Coach is expected to:

i. Instruct Players in the rules and coach their team in such a way as to motivate each Player to always compete according to the rules.

ii. Respect the Match Officials and refrain from questioning their decisions in a disrespectful or abusive manner.

iii. Seek to ensure that fans of their team always conduct themselves with sportsmanship and maturity while in attendance at match sites and assist the Match Officials in maintaining control of spectators during the Matches.

iv. Respect the Coaches and Players of the opposing team both during the play of the Match and at its conclusion, regardless of the result.

v. Maintain control of their emotions and avoid actions, language, and/or gestures that may be interpreted as hostile and humiliating.

vi. Refrain from taking any action that is likely to intimidate, offend, insult, humiliate or discriminate against any other person on the ground of gender, race, disability, age, religious or political belief, sexual orientation, social background, ethnic origin, language, marital or civil partnership status or pregnancy.

vii. Refrain from using drugs or alcohol in the presence of Players or be under the influence/experiencing the after-effects of alcohol or drugs while performing their Coaching/staff duties (this applies to Matches, practices, as well as sanctioned Club activities).

viii. Refrain from taking any Offensive Action during an MLS NEXT Academy Division Competition, MLS NEXT Academy Division Event, or any other activity associated with MLS NEXT Academy Division.

c. <u>Player Code of Conduct</u>

In addition to the above General Principles, all Players are expected to:

i. Accept and observe the authority and decisions of Match Officials and all other MLS NEXT Academy Division disciplinary bodies.

ii. Refrain from taking any action that is likely to intimidate, offend, insult, humiliate or discriminate against any other person on the ground of gender, race, disability, age, religious or political belief, sexual orientation, social background, ethnic origin, language, marital or civil partnership status or pregnancy.

iii. Recognize and appreciate the efforts made by Coaches, parents, Match Officials, and administrators in providing the opportunity to play MLS NEXT Academy Division soccer and enjoy the sporting environment.

iv. Ensure that the Match is played and conducted in accordance with discipline and sporting behavior and acknowledge that it is not sufficient to rely solely upon a Match Official to maintain those principles.

v. Respect the Coaches and Players of the opposing team both during the play of the Match and at its conclusion, regardless of the result.

vi. Refrain from taking any Offensive Action during an MLS NEXT Academy Division Competition, MLS NEXT Academy Division Event, or any other activity associated with MLS NEXT Academy Division.

d. Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct

In addition to the General Principles above, each parent and spectator will ensure that their conduct is that of a responsible observer. To satisfactorily meet these responsibilities, each parent or spectator is expected to:

i. Respect the rules of the Match and cheer for their team in a positive, supportive manner.

ii. Respect the Match Officials and refrain from questioning their decisions in a disrespectful or abusive manner.

iii. Not interact in a negative fashion with other spectators, parents, Players, or Coaches of the opposing team, including use of abusive or hostile language or gestures of ill temper.

iv. Refrain from taking any action that may be likely to intimidate, offend, insult, humiliate or discriminate against any other person on the ground of gender, race, disability, age, religious or political belief, sexual orientation, social background, ethnic origin, language, marital or civil partnership status or pregnancy.

v. Refrain from taking any Offensive Action during an MLS NEXT Academy Division Competition, MLS NEXT Academy Division Event, or any other activity associated with MLS NEXT Academy Division.

III. OFFENSIVE ACTIONS

Offensive Actions, as defined below, are specifically prohibited by the MLS NEXT Academy Division Code of Conduct:

i. Refusing to abide by a Match Official's decision.

ii. Verbally abusing or assaulting any Player, Coach, Match Official, parent, spectator, or Program Staff, during an MLS NEXT Academy Division Match, Competition, or Event.

iii. Physically assaulting, abusing, threatening, any Player, Coach, Match Official, parent, spectator, or Program Staff, during an MLS NEXT Academy Division Match, Competition, or Event.

iv. Stalking, tailing, or attempting to intimidate any Player, Coach, Match Official, parent, spectator, or Program Staff, during an MLS NEXT Academy Division Match, Competition, or Event.

v. Engaging in any other type of violent behavior, such as throwing equipment, or other objects at any Player, Coach, Match Official, parent, spectator, or Program Staff, during an MLS NEXT Academy Division Match, Competition, or Event.

vi. Failing to follow requests from venue staff regarding field operations, policies, or emergency response procedures.

vii. Engaging in any lewd or sexually explicit behavior during an MLS NEXT Academy Division Match, Competition, or Event.

viii. Using drugs or alcohol while coaching, attending, or participating in any MLS NEXT Academy Division Match, Competition, or Event.

ix. Engaging in any action that is likely to intimidate, offend, insult, humiliate or discriminate against any other person on the ground of gender, race, disability, age, religious or political belief, sexual orientation, social background, ethnic origin, language, marital or civil partnership status or pregnancy.

IV. VIOLATIONS

Violations of the Code of Conduct will not be tolerated. Any individual who fails to adhere to conduct expectations should be prepared to accept consequences. Any individual found to have violated the Code of Conduct by, among other things, engaging in fighting, using foul or abusive language, throwing objects, exhibiting disruptive behavior, or performing any Offensive Action as defined above shall be subject to removal from the MLS NEXT Academy Division Event, as well as any additional applicable penalties and sanctions as set forth in the MLS NEXT Academy Division Disciplinary Code.