



# Athlete and Family Handbook

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Introduction & Handbook Overview

The Bridge II Sports staff extends a warm welcome to all new and returning program participants. Our seasonal adapted sports programming offers remarkable opportunities for physical and personal achievement for youth and adult athletes with physical disabilities in the Triangle area. We hope you will take full advantage of our athletic opportunities offered throughout the year as a member of our programs. We are excited to have you on our team!

This Handbook is designed to provide players, parents, and coaches with a comprehensive document outlining the operating model for Bridge II Sports' competitive and recreational sports programming. It includes material related to your physical and personal welfare as necessary sports participant information.

Reading the information presented in this Handbook will provide helpful insight into policies and standards concerning operations. Although a valuable reference document, this Handbook is by no means an adequate substitute for ongoing communication among Bridge II Sports staff, coaches, players, parents, and Board members.

Please refer to [www.bridge2sports.org](http://www.bridge2sports.org) for a digital version of this Handbook. All material contained in this Handbook has been published with the approval of our Board. These policies are subject to change at any time with the discretion of Bridge II Sports staff.

## About Bridge II Sports

### Philosophy

Since 2007, Bridge II Sports (BIS) has created opportunities for youth and adults with physical disabilities to play recreational and competitive adaptive sports. Bridge II Sports, in partnership with community partners, provides equipment, coaching, and a playing space for adaptive sporting opportunities within the Triangle. Bridge II Sports is committed to providing programs in a safe environment where each athlete can explore ability and find value in sport, school, work, and community. We believe in the power of sport as a medium for both social change and individual empowerment. Our programming attests to the true athletic proficiency of our participants, which ultimately raises the profile of adaptive sports in the community and combats any negative perceptions about disability. Through participation, athletes will develop values, attitudes, and skills for personal growth to unlock their true potential.

# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Mission & Vision

Bridge II Sports educates, develops, and implements opportunities for youth and adults with physical disabilities to play individual, team and recreational sports, finding the player within.

By creating opportunities, Bridge II Sports develops a culture of empowerment that fosters respect for all abilities and has a life changing impact on all humanity.

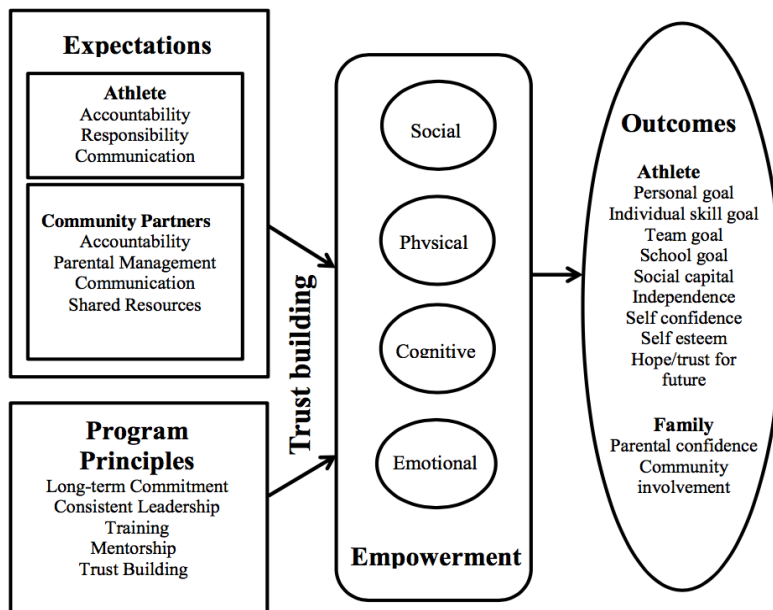
## Program Principles

We employ an empowerment model combination of specified program principles with expectations of both athletes and community partners.

Our Four Program Principles:

1. Long-term commitment
2. Consistent leadership training
3. Mentorship
4. Trust building

## Empowerment Model



Bedini, L., & Thomas, A. (2012).  
Bridge II Sports: A model of  
meaningful activity through  
community-based adapted  
sports. *Therapeutic Recreation  
Journal*, 46(4), 284-300.

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Core Values

- We treat all people with integrity as whole individuals and with deep respect.
- We respect where each athlete is in their process of healing and growth. We also see what they cannot – that is, their true potential as a human being to be successful in life on their own terms.
- In this light, we help each athlete create a path to achieve beyond where they are now, in integrity with themselves, however that looks. Adaption allows for this integrity within competition.
- We require accountability – for actions, finances, and programs. Every action is deliberate and aimed at a specific outcome.
- We strive to raise awareness in every action, uncovering the abilities and potential of every person.
- Everything we do creates positive change towards a more inclusive world.
- Athletic programs, practices, and competitions are not our end game. They are only tools for accomplishing our desired outcomes.
- Independence, deep respect for self and others, confidence, and accountability are the desired outcomes we seek for every athlete, parent, volunteer, staff member, donor, sponsor, Board member, and fans touched by BIIS.
- Bridge II Sports employs high levels of adaptability in reaching its desired goals and outcomes with an unflinching commitment to the highest standards of performance.

## Brand Promises

- If one athlete shows up, we play.
- Clear, consistent, and timely communication to the Board, staff, athletes, sponsors, volunteers, and donors.
- Consistent follow through to create the highest level of impact and alignment with the BIIS vision.
- We provide the highest level of fiduciary accountability to funders, the BIIS Board of Directors, staff members, and athletes.
- We execute and deliver programs and events that enable life changing experiences and a growing positive impact on lives that can be sustained.

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Staff

Bridge II Sports staff are enthusiastic and committed to providing programs that can empower the full individual. Coaching staff is well-informed and certified in sport where applicable.

All staff receive:

- Background checks upon hiring
- CPR certification
- Positive Coaching Alliance training
- Darkness to Light training
- Concussion Awareness training

## Governance

Bridge II Sports is a registered 501(c)(3) charity with the Internal Revenue Service (Tax ID# 20-8577055). All contributions to our organization are fully tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.

Bridge II Sports is governed by a Board of Directors and Committees. The Board is a Working Board, which is an active team comprised of the following committees:

- Executive Committee
- Governance Committee
  - Legal Sub-Committee
  - Program Logistics and Philosophy Sub-Committee
- Finance Committee
- Marketing and Media Committee
- Community Outreach and Fundraising Committee

There is an application process to become a Board member. Anyone seeking to serve on the Board must first serve on a committee. Once the application has been reviewed, a nomination is presented by the Governance Committee. New Board members are recruited when Board positions are open. Board members receive no financial compensation, except Founder.

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Membership

### Member Benefits

#### Players

- Skill development through weekly or bimonthly practice during the season
- Access to talented, dedicated, and knowledgeable staff
- On-site administrative support, prompt and thorough communication, and regular office hours to address each member's needs
- Participation in tournaments – depending on sport
- Being part of a community where mutual support and a distinct culture is fostered
- Special events, such as our Holiday and End-of-Season parties, provide opportunity to develop an athlete's voice for advocacy regarding the need and value of adapted sports
- Priority to get equipment to use for school competitions based on availability and for a set fee

#### Insurance

- BIIS carries 3M/1M
- BIIS carries a 1 M child molestation policy
- BIIS carries errors and omissions coverage for Board members

#### Parent(s)/Family

- Seeing your athlete's skills increase
- Supporting your athlete and their team at practice and/or tournaments
- On-site administrative support, prompt and thorough communication, and regular office hours to address each member's needs
- Being a part of our program and learning how to advocate and raise funds for your athlete's team to compete
- Learning how to appropriately and positively impact your child or family's outcomes

### Affiliation

Athletes that participate on BIIS teams will be affiliated as members with the organization from the time that they officially commit to a program or elect to terminate their membership. Each membership will terminate a year from initial registration.

#### Good-Standing Membership

To be in good standing requires an athlete's membership account to be current, with all outstanding invoices and fees paid according to the established fee. An athlete's conduct must also be consistent with the expectations and policies of BIIS, both during and outside of sports programming.



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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## **Suspension of Participation**

If a player or family does not adhere to membership policies and expectations, BIIS staff have at their discretion the ability to suspend participation of an athlete. Athletes may submit a request to reinstate their membership provided that their behavior is consistent with policies and expectations.

## **Termination of Affiliation**

If a player or family refuses to comply with membership policies, BIIS staff can elect to exclude the athlete or family from further participation in BIIS programming. If a player or family consistently violates BIIS bylaws or behaves in such a way that conflicts with the values of BIIS, BIIS staff can elect to exclude that player and family from participation in BIIS programming. If removed, fees are forfeited.

## **Termination of Affiliation by Athlete/Family**

Any athlete or family member who wishes to terminate their affiliation should do so by contacting both their coach and a member of the BIIS staff.

## **Regional Notification**

In case of the resignation or expulsion of any athlete, the administration shall immediately notify the appropriate affiliation of such action.

## **Athlete Membership Fees – Unlimited access to all BIIS Programs**

In order to participate in BIIS programs, one of the following must be met:

Option 1: \$17 Auto monthly payment for 1<sup>st</sup> family member to receive access to all BIIS programming.

Option 2: \$25 Auto monthly payment for family members of 2 or more with physical disabilities participating in BIIS Programs for full access.

Option 3: Athlete Scholarship (Financial Aid)

Speak to Coach for scholarship application

Option 4: Non-member – Fee of \$20 PER session. No family discounts.

## **Membership Support**

If you are unable to fulfill one of our three membership options, please contact our Director of Programs at [programs@bridge2sports.org](mailto:programs@bridge2sports.org) so we can meet your needs. Bridge II Sports DOES NOT discriminate against potential athletes and their families based on income.

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Bridge II Sports Programs Subject to Change

### Recreational Sports

Program	Season	Months
Air Rifle	Spring/Summer/Fall	January – November
Archery	Spring/Summer/Fall	January – November
Cycling	Spring/Summer/Fall	March – November
Fishing	Spring/Summer/Fall	April – October
Golf	Spring/Summer/Fall	March - October
Kayaking	Summer	May – September

### Competitive Sports – We Provide Competitive Team Sports

Program	Season	Months
Boccia	Spring/Summer	January – April/June - November
Goalball	Fall/Spring	September - April
Wheelchair Basketball	Summer/Spring	August - April

### Value of Participation in Sport

- Higher graduation rates
- Lower discipline rates
- Increases motivation and commitment to achieve
- Improves physical and mental health
- Increases family and community involvement
- Encourages teamwork and camaraderie
- Teaches sportsmanship
- Creates a sense of community around common goals
- Creates mutual respect
- Peer engagement
- Improves self-esteem
- Increases self-discipline and follow through
- Creates bodily mastery
- Normalizes disability
- Helps athletes embrace and take ownership of their impairments

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Seasonal Operations

### Schedule

Each season's schedule will be communicated by the coach at the beginning of each season. Any additional information or changes will be communicated in a timely manner, as needed.

### Communication

The BIIS website, [www.bridge2sports.org](http://www.bridge2sports.org), is our primary source for team information, including practice and tournament schedules, directions, policies and procedures, news, and more.

Email is our secondary source of communication.

Once our team rosters are set each season, coaches or team representatives distribute team contact lists with key player information including name, address, parent/guardian names, email addresses, and telephone numbers (i.e., home, cell, parent/guardian cell, etc.). This information is distributed for the convenience of our members and to facilitate communication. We request that all recipients respect other members' privacy and maintain list confidentiality.

### Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather and/or school closings, BIIS staff and coaches will communicate any closure or delay notice no later than two hours prior to event via website, email, Facebook, text, or phone to specific program participants. In some cases, when conditions vary across the area, activities will be deemed "optional" for participants. Regardless of whether an event is cancelled or delayed, families are always encouraged to use their best judgement in these situations. When weather impacts tournaments, the host site determines whether the event will be cancelled or postponed.

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## Facilities

Policies apply to all indoor and outdoor facilities owned or used by BIIS. Many facilities utilized by BIIS athletes are community partners, and it is a privilege to have access to this work and play spaces. Bridge II Sports expects athletes to honor the rules and regulations held by these public domains. During programming, only participants are allowed on the designated playing space. All equipment specific to programming are for participant-use only.

- Only participants are allowed on the designated playing space.
- NO FOOD OR BEVERAGES, other than water, are allowed within the playing space.
- Non-participant children MUST be supervised by a parent or guardian.
- All equipment in the gym or event area, including balls, are for the athletes ONLY.
- Do not interrupt coaching staff while in a training session.
- Please let staff know if anything in gyms or equipment needs attention.
- Our office is our workspace. Please knock-on closed office doors before entering.

## Athlete Policies & Expectations

## Participation

Being a member of Bridge II Sports is a privilege that carries certain expectations and responsibilities. Athletes are held to high standards because of their high visibility, representing Bridge II Sports, the local community, and the Paralympic Movement as a whole. All BIIS athletes make a commitment to BIIS by accepting a position on any given team. Therefore, our athletes are expected to maintain certain standards on and off the designated playing space. Athletes are required to read and sign the Athlete Commitment Letter that outlines athlete expectations and commitments required for participation in BIIS programming. The Athlete Commitment Letter is attached at the end of this Handbook.

## Academics

Sport is an extension of education. Bridge II Sports programming provides a learning environment for skill and personal development; however, we are not a substitute for the academic curriculum provided by schools. Maintaining academic eligibility is an important athlete responsibility. Bridge II Sports requires players to maintain a C or above in all of their classes in order to compete. Athletes are asked to share their report cards with coaching staff. If an athlete is struggling academically, they are responsible for talking with coaches and parents to develop and implement an academic action plan to receive help and support.

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## Sportsmanship

Athletes are expected to bring their best to all practices and competition, which includes playing within the rules of the sport and the boundaries of clean and fair play.

- Be cooperative: Join teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials in mutual quest for excellence
- Be fair: Compete skillfully, guided by the letter and spirit of the rules
- Be gracious: Savor the challenge of a tough competitor and meet it with your finest performance
- Be honorable: Respect the game and everyone's contributions
- Be humble: Take success in stride – share the credit

## Team Commitment

To be successful, every member of a team must work together to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Sacrifice, loyalty, common goals, working with others, communication, and sharing responsibility are all important components of teamwork. Bridge II Sports teammates are expected to hold each other accountable on and off the designated playing space. Bridge II Sports desires each team to be a family.

## Come Ready to Play

Athletes should come to practice on time, focused, and ready to learn. On-time is having all necessary equipment and being ready to follow directions at the start of each practice time. Recreational sports practices are not mandatory, but BII S encourages frequent practice attendance and exploration of our sports programs. Competitive sports practices are mandatory, and absences/tardiness should be infrequent and clearly communicated by the athlete directly with the coaching staff. Bridge II Sports expects competitive athletes to show dedication to their sport(s). Individual hard work and resilience will lead the team to success.

Athletes are also expected to keep each practice location neat and organized.

- Line-up your belongings neatly or in a location specified by your coach.
- Dispose of trash.
- Put all training equipment away in its proper place.
- Take all of your belongings when you leave the practice location. Items left behind will be "earned back."

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## Equipment

Sports equipment issued to athletes during games and practices is provided by Bridge II Sports. Please treat all equipment with respect. Bridge II Sports expects athletes to learn the basics of wheelchair maintenance, i.e., tire pressure, cleaning, strapping, etc. Athletes are expected to help with set-up and break-down of all equipment before and after practices. Athletes are expected to bring their own water bottles and dress appropriately for play.

## Playing Time

Our experience is that the concept of 'fair' playing time has a different meaning for coaches, parents, and athletes. Disparate views on what constitutes as 'fair' playing time is the most common source of athlete and/or family member frustration in sports.

The key to minimizing the potential for misunderstandings about playing time among coaching staff, athletes, and family are recognizing the following:

- One of the greatest team management challenges for any coach is balancing the dual interests of distributing playing time fairly on the individual level and achieving the goals and objectives of the team as a whole.
- 'Fair' playing time does not mean 'equal' playing time.
- Playing time philosophy and its distribution across team members will differ depending on age, commitment to team, and competitive level.
- Unique player roles, by nature of position, skill, or ability, can lead to difference in playing time that are necessary and appropriate.
- Athletes with concerns regarding playing time should address their coach directly.
- Any conversation with a BIIS staff member, other than the coach, pertaining to playing time will be held by appointment only and may require the presence of another BIIS staff member.

## Dress Code

**All athletes will display clean, neat, unified, and modest dress at all functions.** We are representatives of not only BIIS, but also our families, and schools.

When traveling together as a team by any transportation mode, i.e., air, bus, van, subway, etc. to tournament locations, players will depart wearing BIIS warm-ups and issued t-shirts. On the return trip, players will wear

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the warm-up jacket and issued t-shirt. The warm-up pants may not be fit to wear due to perspiration from the weekend tournament so the athletes can wear jeans or shorts. The travel officer will note to the team representatives if a Warm Weather Tournament or Cold Weather Tournament dress code is required.

**Cold Weather Tournaments:** Players will arrive and depart from the tournament venues in BIIS warm-ups, issued t-shirts, and backpacks.

**Warm Weather Tournaments:** Players will arrive and depart from tournament venues in issued t-shirts and warm-up pants or their own gym blue or black shorts. Jean shorts are NOT acceptable.

## Social Media/Networking

Athletes and family members are responsible for anything posted on social media that refers to BIIS, team staff, and players. Bridge II Sports views all forms of social media, i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, etc. as public regardless of personal profile settings. Please remember that any information posted reflects the organization. Bridge II Sports respects the freedom of athletes to use social media as a form of self-expression, however, BIIS emphasizes the need to exercise care in setting boundaries between personal and public online behavior.

Recommended guidelines:

- Be aware that privacy settings are not foolproof
- Avoid posting confidential information
- Avoid unprofessional public profiles
- Avoid posting illegal activities
- Avoid bullying or threats of violence
- Avoid lying, cheating, and plagiarizing

Online conduct that poorly reflects BIIS or violates BIIS policies may subject an athlete to discipline by BIIS coaches and staff.

## Code of Conduct

The appropriate conduct of BIIS staff, volunteers, Board members, players, coaches, chaperones, and family members is essential for a safe, healthy, and productive sports environment. As such, our Code of Conduct policy is applicable to all persons directly or indirectly associated with BIIS.

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

**THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS ARE PROHIBITED** at any practice, tournament, or event. These policies apply to conduct, both on and off the designated playing space, and will carry progressive disciplinary action up to and including removal from BIIS.

## 1. Personal Behavior

- Possession or use of any alcoholic substance, tobacco product, or any other substance banned by BIIS.
- Possession or use of any over-the-counter medication or prescription drug of any kind without the knowledge of the team, coach, or team chaperone.
- Physical damage to any BIIS property or any facility, hotel, or dorm room.
- Theft of personal or public property.
  - Full restitution will be part of any penalty imposed.
- Use of a recognized identification card by anyone other than the individual described on the card.
- Violation of the specific policies, regulation, and/or procedures of the National Governing Body (NGB) or the facility used in conjunction with any (sanctioned) event
  - It is the responsibility of all persons associated with BIIS to be familiar with policies, regulations, and procedures of the NGB or facility.

## 2. Behavior Affecting Others

- Illegal transport, illegal possession, or use of illegal drugs or other substances banned by BIIS.
  - Note: Disciplinary actions for use of banned substance shall be in accordance with a USAV Drug Policy Program and the US Olympic Committee's Anti-Doping Policies.
- Possession of fireworks, ammunition, firearms, or other weapons as well as any item or material which by commonly accepted practices would be hazardous or harmful to other persons.
- Providing any over-the-counter or prescription medication, legal or illegal drug, alcohol, tobacco, or any banned substance to another individual (either knowingly or unknowingly).
- Any action considered to be an offense under Federal, State, or Local law ordinances.
- Conduct that is inappropriate as determined by comparison to normally, accepted behavior.
- Verbal intimidation or physical harm to any individual during a tournament, travel event, or practice.



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## Confidentiality

All member communications, program documents (other than marketing materials), and training program materials are confidential. They are not to be made public or shared with non-BIIS members. We expect all members to adhere to this policy and note that members who share such information will be in violation of your agreement to follow policies.

### Recreational Athletes

Bridge II Sports values every athlete who is interested in playing adaptive sports for regular physical activity, social interaction, and leisure pursuit. Recreational sports are available for athletes who desire to explore adaptive sporting options, skill development, and/or sport-specific competency. Recreational athletes are not mandated to attend practice but are encouraged to try various sports and participate on a frequent basis to reap the known benefits of participation in sports.

Sports are inherently competitive. Each recreational athlete has the opportunity to compete competitively at practice, but if they are motivated to compete on a competitive BIIS team, they will be held to a higher standard of performance, including additional training. Therefore, they will have to adhere to competitive athlete and team policies.

### Competitive Athletes

Bridge II Sports offers competitive athletes' opportunities to play adaptive sports at an elite level. At BIIS, competitive athletes are expected to have an athlete mentality, including a motivation to compete at their best in order to win. Competitive athletes are held to a higher standard of performance expectations, team commitment, and additional training outside of practice. These guidelines below are a basis to ensure a clear understanding of what it means to be on a competitive team and the obligations associated with that commitment.

## Attendance

All trainings, practices, competitions, clinics, meetings, and service projects or fundraising ventures are mandatory for each competitive athlete. Our schedules are provided in advance, and we expect athlete absences/tardiness to be infrequent and clearly communicated with the coaching staff. If an athlete is unable to communicate for themselves due to an illness or injury, a family member must let the coaching staff know

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of the absence as soon as possible. Failure of an athlete to communicate with coaching staff on attendance issues is a serious infraction.

## **Additional Training**

Team practices are limited. Athletes looking to compete at the highest level will need to condition and train outside of team practices. Without question, serious athletes need additional training in order to achieve the necessary physical and mental conditioning required to be an elite athlete.

## **Tournaments**

Players are required to review the tournament schedule and commit to attend by the deadline defined by the coach. Athletes are responsible for the designated payment associated with that tournament, which will be determined before the registration due date. Once the deadline has passed, coaches and/or BIIS staff determine if an athlete can be added to the roster. Athletes added to the roster after the registration deadline has passed are responsible for the associated tournament payment plus any penalty of late registration assigned by the coach or BIIS staff.

Playing time during each tournament is left to the discretion of the coach. It is not appropriate for parents to discuss playing time with coaches. Athletes with concerns regarding playing time should address their coach directly. Note that 'fair play' does not always mean equal playing time. Often guidelines for playing time consider athlete attendance at practice, skill level, position, and leadership.

## **Fundraising**

Bridge II Sports is registered as a 501(c)(3) charity with the Internal Revenue Service. Our programs and events are supported by sponsors, donations, and grants. Therefore, we expect competitive teams to contribute to their own success. Athletes and family members are expected to be advocates. During practices, competitions, and other events, athletes and families are expected to be a unified voice to promote their sport and other BIIS initiatives. Athletes and family members are expected to help raise funds for competitions, travel, team uniforms, and other seasonal expenses by participating in BIIS fundraisers. Bridge II Sports will support individual endeavors and new ideas. We desire to have a community where mutual support is fostered. We want our teams to take initiative and seek success.

## **Travel**

- Bring both home and away jerseys to each competition. Athletes are recommended to bring several undershirts. Bring appropriate care items for personal hygiene and competition play.

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- Bring a large water bottle to every game. Athletes are responsible for hydration and keeping track of their water bottle during transition periods. It is NOT the responsibility of coaches or parents to fill or carry water bottles.
- Bring healthy snacks. Make good healthy food choices. Your body needs proper fuel for competitive play.
- Athletes will contribute to team success on and off the designated playing space by focusing on the game, supporting, and encouraging teammates, exemplifying good sportsmanship, and displaying a positive attitude.
- Always demonstrate good sportsmanship. Athletes will refuse to respond to trash talking, heckling, or other antagonism. Team play will speak for itself!
- Any areas occupied by teams, i.e., benches, sideline, “camp area,” etc. will be maintained and kept neat and orderly, regardless of their condition when team arrived.
- Every team member is responsible for completing any duties relating to competition.
- Youth athletes are under the supervision of coaches, BIIS staff, and designated chaperones.
- **NEVER** go anywhere alone. You must be with at least one other team member and have the chaperone and/or coach’s permission, i.e., restroom, soda machine, getting taped, buying souvenirs, etc.
- Rest up! Sleep is important for competitive play. Abide by set curfews.
- Coaches will formally ‘release’ athletes once all competition duties are completed.
- Honor the Code of Conduct.

NOTE: Athlete attendance and adherence to the Athlete Commitment Letter reflects player and family hotel costs during tournament travel.

- 100% of an athlete’s hotel costs will be paid for by BIIS if the following criteria are met:
  - Athlete rooms with another athlete
  - Athlete has participated in fundraisers
  - Athlete attendance is 100% or excused by coaches
- 50% of an athlete’s hotel costs will be paid for by BIIS if the following criteria are met:
  - Athlete rooms with family
  - Athlete has participated in fundraisers
  - Athlete attendance is 100% or excused by coaches
- An athlete is responsible for their hotel costs if the following criteria are unmet:
  - Athlete has NOT participated in team or individual fundraisers
  - Athlete attendance is less than 100% or unexcused
  - Athlete does NOT adhere to principles described in this Handbook

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Chaperone Responsibilities & Expectations

### Responsibilities

- Ensure that players are:
  - FED
  - RESTED
  - SAFE
- Accompany the team and assist the coach by upholding team expectations and travel standards.
- Help coordinate travel, meals, and transportation.
- Adhere to the tournament itinerary.
  - Keep athletes and coaches punctual.
- Ensure athlete safety.
  - Carry a master list of athlete cell phone numbers, parent contact information, and medical/participant forms.
  - Carry a hotel rooming list.
- Stay accessible for coaches, BIIS staff, and athletes.

### Qualities

- Stamina, vim, and vigor!
- Must have a current background check with BIIS
- Must have the backbone of a drill sergeant, but the patience of a saint
  - A tournament is NOT when you decide to have the athletes be responsible.
- A compassionate parent who can help the athletes vent and unwind from a long day, but who isn't interested in being everyone's "friend."
- It is very advantageous if you have a sense of direction and can drive a full-size van.

### Cost

The team will pay for the chaperone's hotel room that is shared with another chaperone. The chaperone pays for their meals. If the chaperone's spouse/partner is also attending the tournament, he/she will be required to get their own room but is welcome to eat with the team.

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## Travel Expectations

### Before leaving

- Pack a small sewing kit, small flashlight, permanent marker, and anything else you can think of.
- Carry a master list of the athlete's cell phone numbers, their parents' phone numbers, and their emergency contact numbers.
- Get the rooming lists from your coach.
- Find out the "arrival window" if the tournament is one that people drive or fly to. You or the coach needs to be there at the start time of the "arrival window" to the end.

### At the Hotel

- Check in
  - Make sure all "extras" are turned off in the rooms.
  - Get two keys for each room. Give one to the athlete you assign to be 'the keeper' and keep one for yourself for bed checks and in the case of a lost key. Use a permanent marker to mark the plastic keys with the first initial of each athlete in that room.
  - Despite our best efforts, it's not uncommon for the hotel to assign the athletes to rooms on different floors or on opposite ends of the floor. Please ask the hotel if it's possible to group the athletes closer together. It's best to ask where not only the athlete's rooms are, but yours and the coaches. In many cases we can switch a chaperone room with a player room to get the athletes closer together. Please use common sense, but don't forget it never hurts to ask the hotel for some help.
- As soon as athletes are settled in their rooms
  - Have a meeting with the chaperones and the coach if they are available.
  - Make sure all athletes write down your room number.
  - Remind the athletes of the rules, the evening's agenda, and curfew.
  - Help the athletes figure out what time they need to get up, e.g., four athletes showering in the morning versus just two, in order to be ready to meet at the designated time in the morning with the coach or have breakfast.
  - Each room should call the front desk for a wakeup call. If needed, instruct them how to do it.
- Curfew
  - You enforce the curfew that the coach sets.
    - There are two curfews:
      1. In the room
      2. Lights out
  - Once lights are out, cell phones should only be used for emergencies.

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

- At some point after the athletes should be asleep, do a bed check with your flashlight or by listening at the door. Warn the athletes that you will be coming so you do not startle them.
- After curfew, the chaperone must stay in the chaperone's room so that players can find them if the need arises.
- All cell phones will be collected at "lights out." Make sure they know how to reach you using the hotel phone. Parents are instructed to call the chaperones if there is a need to contact their athlete during the night.
- Mornings
  - Make sure all the athletes are up and getting ready. Start with a call, and then go room-to-room.
  - Remind the athletes to double-check their bags for the day, i.e., warm-ups, uniform shirts, sneakers, money, etc.
  - If snacks and drinks for the day have been purchased, please make sure the athletes have packed them.
- Checkout
  - Prior to checkout ensure the athletes have all their belongings and have left the room in reasonable order.

## Off Time

- It is encouraged that players spend their time off the designated playing space as a team. Although sometimes players need to have a dedicated study room to meet their school needs. One chaperone can stay in the hotel while another chaperone takes the rest of the team for activities.
- The chaperones are in charge of the team when they are off the designated playing space. They help make the decisions regarding meals and activities as well as enforcing bedtime, curfews, and rules.
- If you play in the early wave, that usually allows for more time to explore the area. Ask the concierge about the local attractions, i.e., sights, movies, etc. We err on the side of caution so only allow athletes to participate in age-appropriate activities.
- The athletes **NEVER** go anywhere alone. They must be with at least two other athletes, i.e., groups of three, and have the chaperone or coach's permission.
- During off times, the chaperone must stay accessible. That means if the athletes are in the hotel, the chaperone needs to be in the hotel nearby. If the players are at the mall for some rest and relaxation, then the chaperone needs to be at the mall as well.
- When out shopping, the athletes need to stay in view. If in a mall area, you can assign specific check-in times and let them break off into groups of 3 to 5 athletes.

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Food

- When you go out to eat, first try to get separate checks. If you can't, ensure that each athlete pays their portion of the check appropriately.
  - Note: Athletes pay for their own meals unless otherwise stated.
- If there is a market nearby, bring the athletes to buy their snacks and cases of water. You may also collect money to be used in order to buy snacks and lunch during the day. Most food at the tournament venues is expensive.
- If you are playing in a late wave, get some menus from restaurants that deliver and bring them with you to the playing area. Sometimes games may go to 9 PM and that gives you the ability to call the order in before you get back to the hotel in order to get the food in a timely fashion.
- You can ask other parents to help go on food runs.
- The team eats together. If parents want to join, that's fine as long as the team still eats together. If it comes down to a player or two not being able to fit at the table and parents have joined the group, seat the parents at another table.

<b>Injury Prevention</b>
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Participation in sports may result in severe injury. Changes in rules, improved conditioning programs, modern equipment, and medical coverage have reduced this risk. However, it is impossible to eliminate such incidents from occurring. Players may reduce their chance of injury by obeying all safety rules in their sport, reporting all injuries to their coaches, and inspecting equipment each practice. Bridge II Sports athletes are responsible for keeping coaches informed about injuries, absences, rehabilitation, and other medical processes. Injured athletes are encouraged to attend practices, competitions, and other team activities to stay engaged in their respective sport.

Injury prevention is critical to an athlete's success and a necessary component of a comprehensive training program. More training does not translate to greater success in the absence of knowledge of injury prevention and the implementation of an active injury prevention and physical recovery program.

Critical to maintaining a healthy and fit athlete are the following:

1. Athletes should understand and implement injury prevention exercises and other healthy behaviors in their regular weekly routine.
2. Family support and encouragement in rationale for and execution of the exercises and other preventative measures are very important.
3. Periodically, BIIS will host healthy awareness activities to educate families on good practices. Please take advantage of these when they are available.



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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Am I Hurt?

Some degree of pain and discomfort is inherent in all athletic play. This makes knowing the difference between “hurting” and “being hurt” especially difficult. Keeping an athlete healthy, minimizing injury, avoiding injury aggravation/escalation, and returning from injuries takes the collective attention and efforts of athletes, family members, and coaching staff.

An athlete’s disclosure is the necessary first step in diagnosis, treatment, and recovery from an injury. Failure to disclose an injury, regardless of what seems to be a good reason, i.e., “my team needs me,” is both dangerous and a serious concern. Reporting injury, pain, and/or discomfort is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of responsibility to yourself and your team.

## Overuse/Stress Injuries

Overuse injuries are the result of repetitive movement. Prevention relies on awareness first, action second. Identifying a problem can easily prevent the injury from worsening. Athletes and parents should understand that responding to early warning signs is a responsible form of action and does not define an athlete’s ability to play.

Overuse or stress injuries, most often, are preventable. Overuse injuries are the result of repetitive movement. Prevention relies solely on awareness first, action second. Ignoring an injury will never make it go away.

## Concussions

A concussion is a brain injury that is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. It can also be caused by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They may result from athlete collision, contact with the floor, or contact with an object.

An athlete suspected of sustaining a head injury in practice or a game shall be removed from competition at that time and possibly for the remainder of the day. Bridge II Sports strongly recommends that after any head trauma an athlete receives clearance from a physician as concussions can have a cumulative effect.

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Bridge II Sports Return to Play Policy

The following is a return to play policy for Bridge II Sports. It is meant to be used if a Bridge II Sports athlete has suffered a concussion recently and is looking to return to engaging in any Bridge II Sports program or event. The following policy is in accordance with steps that are implemented by the CDC's proposed Return to Play Policy and is modified to fit the scope of our organization.

**Step 1:** Athlete must return to regular activities (Such as school, work, or daily tasks). Athlete is back to their regular activities. An athlete's return to regular activities involves a stepwise process. It starts with a few days of rest (2-3 days) and is followed by light activity and moderate activity that does not worsen symptoms.<sup>1</sup>

**Step 2:** Athlete displays that they are capable of light aerobic activity, without worsening symptoms of concussion. Athlete should be capable of light aerobic activity, such as walking, jogging, or calisthenics.

*\*If the sport they are returning to only requires light aerobic activity (Archery, Air Rifle, Boccia etc.) the athlete is clear to return to play after this step, unless otherwise noted by a health professional. \**

**Step 3:** Athlete displays that they are capable of moderate aerobic activity, without worsening symptoms of concussion. Athlete should be capable of moderate aerobic activity, such as brief jogging, moderate biking, moderate weightlifting, or brief running/sprinting.

*\*If the sport they are returning to only requires moderate aerobic activity (Golf, Goalball, Fishing etc.) the athlete is clear to return to play after this step, unless otherwise noted by a health professional. \**

**Step 4:** Athlete displays that they are capable of heavy, non-contact aerobic activity, without worsening symptoms of concussion. Athlete should be capable of heavy, non-contact aerobic activity, such as sprinting, regular weightlifting, or non-contact sport specific skills.

*\*If the sport they are returning to only requires heavy, non-contact aerobic activity (Track and Field, Cycling, Kayaking etc.) the athlete is clear to return to play after this step, unless otherwise noted by a health professional. \**

**Step 5:** Athlete displays that they are capable of heavy, contact aerobic activity, without worsening symptoms of concussion. Athlete should be capable of heavy, contact aerobic activity, such as team sports and full practice drills.

*\*If the sport they are returning to only requires heavy, contact aerobic activity (Wheelchair Basketball PRACTICE etc.) the athlete is clear to return to play after this*

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

*step, unless otherwise noted by a health professional. \**

**Step 6:** Athlete displays that they are capable of heavy, contact aerobic activity, without worsening symptoms of concussion. Athlete should be capable of heavy, contact aerobic activity, such as team sports, full practice drills, and show without doubt that they have returned to form before concussion.

*\*The athlete is clear to return to COMPETITION after this step, unless otherwise noted by a health professional. \**

<sup>1</sup> Returning to Sports and Activities | HEADS UP | CDC Injury Center

## Nutrition

The importance of good nutrition and hydration practices cannot be overstated in the area of preventing injury. A balanced diet is necessary for our athletes to have the strength and endurance to participate fully in practice and competition.

## Amateur Status

All athletes should be aware of the possible impact on amateur status that can result from receiving prizes or prize money from participation in an event. (This area will be developed more, as it is currently being discussed if grants for sports equipment will be considered gifts and awards.) Verify with the North Carolina High School Athletic Association for the most up to date rules.

From the 2017/2018 NCAA Division 1 Manual:

- Review on the NCAA website: 12.1.2.4 Exceptions to Amateurism Rule

## Parent (Guardian)/Family Expectations

Family members of BIIS athletes are a part of our success! Support of your athletes and our organization helps us provide valuable opportunities. We consider each family of our athletes as members of Bridge II Sports. Therefore, we expect family members to maintain certain standards alongside our athletes.

## Practices

Team practices are limited. Parents and spectators are welcome during practice. However, please minimize any disturbances that might distract athletes or negatively impact training. Refrain from giving coaching advice

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

to your athlete during practices or competition. Conflicting instructions can hinder the development of an athlete and their team. Encourage coaching staff and celebrate the team victories. During practices in which coaches allow family members to join the training session, family members are expected to come with the same readiness to play as described in the athlete expectations. Also, family members are responsible for their athlete's transportation to and from practice.

## Support Your Athlete

Support your athlete's commitment to their sport by allowing them to make the experience their own. Encourage their participation and perseverance to overcome obstacles that arise in order to serve your athlete's overall development in their sport. Stress the importance of the complete athlete, which includes both physical and mental toughness. Also, understand that athletes are responsible for many aspects of sport participation, including maintaining facilities, communication of absences, equipment maintenance, etc. Reinforcement of these expectations develops the values of responsibility and accountability in each athlete. Most importantly, celebrate your athlete's victories.

Recognize that:

1. Athletic experiences are designed to challenge your athlete physically, technically, and mentally.
2. Bridge II Sports coaches are trained and aware of what their sport requires.
3. Sports include mistakes. Athletes that learn how to handle mistakes and learn from these experiences will develop into confident people on and off the designated playing space.
4. It can be difficult to remember #1 through #3 when your athlete's response to challenges is emotional.

To act in a manner that:

1. Supports the goals and objectives of the organization and the team as well as adheres to the expectations and policies in this Handbook.
2. Demonstrates control over your own emotional reactions to your athlete's situation.
3. Serves your athlete's overall development in sport and life by positively directing them to work with their teammates (when appropriate), coaching staff, and administration as they navigate the challenging environment of adaptive sports.

## Perspective of Sport Participation

Emphasize that academics come first. Use sport as a way to teach them how to interact with other people and how differences can be embraced for the betterment of the team. Use sport as a way to teach life skills, such as camaraderie, respect, responsibility, time management, discipline, communication, etc. Our programs are designed to challenge and develop athletes on and off the designated playing space. Bridge II Sports emphasizes how sport is simply a tool for personal empowerment.

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Parent (Guardian)/Coach Relationships

Both parenting and coaching are challenging tasks. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other for the benefit of the athlete. As parents, you have the right to understand the expectations that are placed on your athlete. This begins with clear communication.

Communication you can expect from the coach:

- Coaching philosophy
- Athlete and team expectations
- Locations and times of practices and competitions
- Team requirements and disciplinary actions
- Availability of the coach if a meeting is requested

Communication coaches can expect from parents/family:

- Encourage athletes to initiate communication with their coach
- Notification of any schedule conflict that may involve absence from practice or tournament
- Bridge II Sports uses email as a primary form of communication. Reading and completing actionable items in a timely manner is expected. If you are not receiving information, please inform the coach, BIIS staff, or contact the office.

## Benefits and Challenges of Sport Participation

Athlete participation on a sports team will involve some of the most rewarding moments in life. Likewise, there will be times when things do not go according to the wishes of your athlete.

This is a time when your athlete should set up an appointment to talk with the coach. This type of communication will provide the coach and athlete with a better understanding of personal and team goals. This is also an important part of athlete maturity and development.

It is very difficult to accept that not every player receives the same amount of playing time in competition. Coaches use their experience and training to make decisions based upon evaluation of practice performance and what they believe is at the best interest of the player and team.

- Topics that can and should be discussed with your athlete's coach:
  - Suggestions on how to help your athlete improve
  - Concerns about your athlete's behavior and/or academic progress

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

- The following items are left to the discretion of the coach:
  - Playing time
  - Play calling and game strategy
  - Other athletes

Procedures to follow if you have a concern:

- Have your athlete set up a meeting with the coach to discuss the issue through an Athlete/Coach meeting. Athlete attendance is required. Parent or family attendance is optional.
- Call or email the coach or BIIS staff to directly set up an in-person Parent (Guardian)/Coach meeting.
- Please do NOT discuss concerns regarding playing time, team performance, athlete role, or other coaching responsibilities with coaches or BIIS staff immediately before, after, or during practices or competition. Coaches are responsible for the supervision and safety of the athletes during these times. In addition, these can be emotional moments, which are likely to negatively escalate.
- If an issue is not brought to resolution through a/an (1) Athlete/Coach meeting or (2) Parent (Guardian)/Coach meeting, then a parent/guardian or family member can set up an appointment with the Director of Programs or the CEO to discuss issues of concern so that an appropriate plan of action can be developed.

<b>Escalation &amp; Due Process</b>
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If any player or parent has a complaint or concern, they are expected to speak directly with their team coach to try to resolve the issue. If, after failing to resolve an issue, a player or parent would like further consideration, they should then contact the CEO.

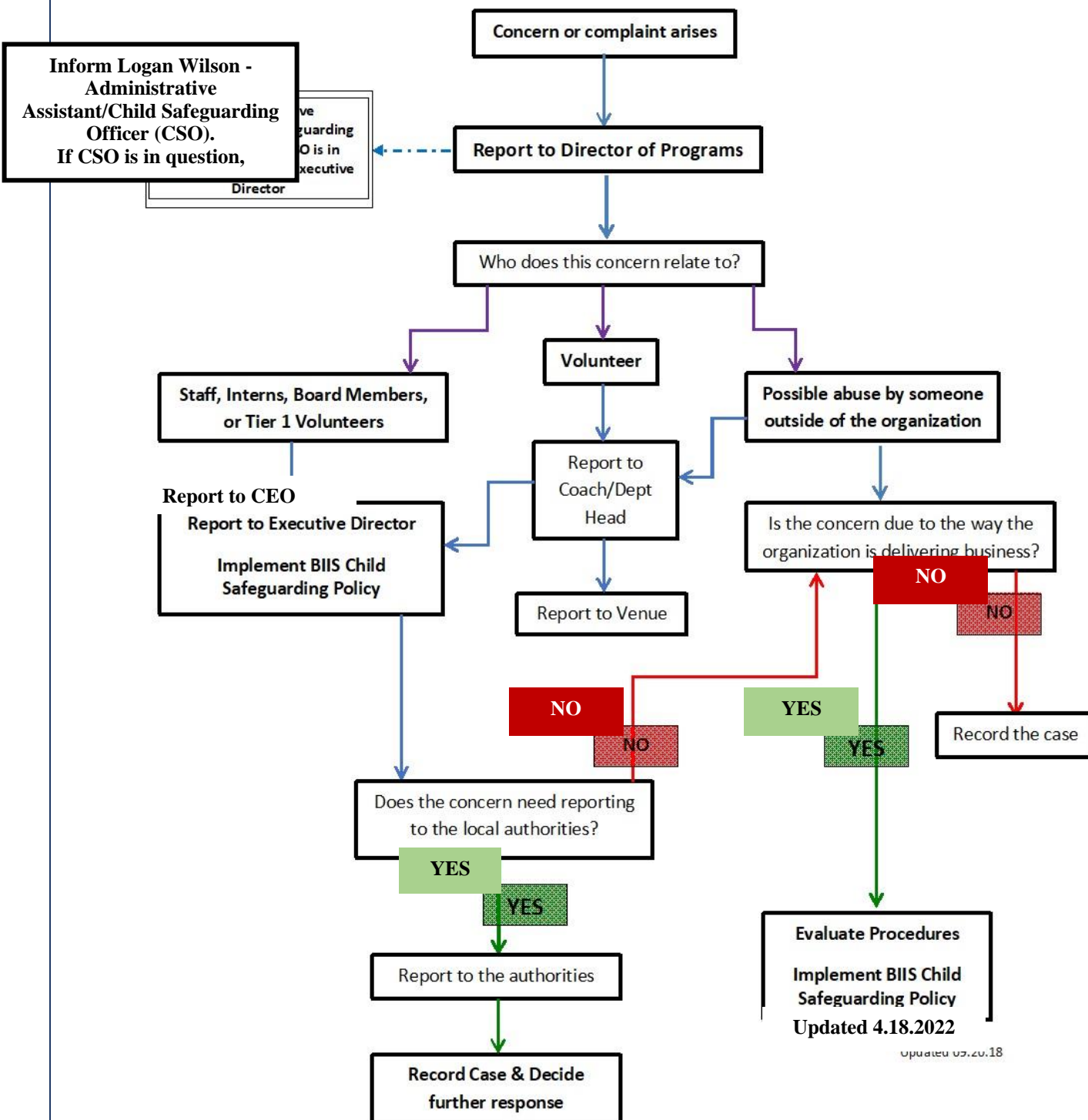
Bridge II Sports follows the Darkness to Light trainings when it comes to safeguarding our athletes. North Carolina is a must-report state regarding child endangerment.

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## BIIS Child Safeguarding Policy - Reporting Process





# BRIDGE II SPORTS

## Handbook Agreement

### Athlete and Parent/Guardian

I have READ and ASKED any questions needed to clarify the policies of Bridge II Sports.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have READ the Athlete and Family Handbook and AGREE to follow the procedures and expectations set forth within this Handbook.

Membership Payment Method: \_\_\_\_\_ Option 1 (\$17 Individual per month)

**\*More Details on Page: 8** \_\_\_\_\_ Option 2 (Family of 2+ - \$25 per month)

\_\_\_\_\_ Option 3 (Athlete Sponsorship)

\_\_\_\_\_ Option 4 (Non-member – \$20 PER session.)

Athlete Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# BRIDGE II SPORTS

<b>Athlete Commitment Letter</b>
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By obtaining membership, all recreational and competitive athletes are making a commitment to themselves and Bridge II Sports. Please read these commitments carefully.

For All Athletes:

1. I will maintain a *C or above* in all my classes and present necessary report cards to coaches or BIIS staff in a timely fashion in order to compete. I will collaborate with my coaches, family, and teachers to create an action plan if I need help in school.
2. I will respond to emails and phone calls promptly. Should a conflict arise, I will notify my coach immediately by email, text, or phone call.
3. I will notify my coach in advance if I will be attending practice or if I will be unable to attend. We will not provide you equipment if we do not know you are coming.
4. I commit to keeping a good attitude, use encouraging words to teammates, and following directions of the coaches. NO swearing or foul language is allowed.
5. I commit to dressing appropriately for practice and being mindful of my personal hygiene, including bathing, using deodorant, and brushing my teeth.
6. I will display appropriate behavior on and off the designated playing spaces, including practices, tournaments, school, home, and in the community. I will:
  - Not talk back to coaches or referees. If I do, I will be pulled out of the game.
  - Refrain from negative comments, behavior, or body language.
  - Give encouragement to my teammates and always exemplify good sportsmanship.
7. I will participate in at least one community awareness activity as well as established fundraising ventures with my respective sport(s) over the season to fund program sustainability.

Competitive Athletes Only:

8. I commit to participating in at least two community awareness activities over the season.
9. I commit to being part of two or more fundraisers in order to be eligible for team funds to help with travel costs. I understand that practice attendance reflects playing time and travel costs.
10. I commit to developing an athlete mentality in order to compete at an elite level.
11. I commit to training outside of practice to enhance my skill mastery and performance.

Athlete Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_