



Nicholasville-Jessamine County Parks and Recreation (NJCPR)

Policy: Physical & Verbal Altercation Policy

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Authorized by: Anessa Snowden, Director

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Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines for handling physical and verbal altercations involving leaders/staff, participants, and spectators/fans within Nicholasville-Jessamine County Parks and Recreation programs and facilities. This policy aims to maintain a safe and respectful environment for all individuals involved, fostering teamwork and sportsmanship.

Definitions

- **Physical Altercation:** Any instance where physical contact occurs between individuals with the intent to cause harm or intimidate.
- **Verbal Altercation:** Any instance where individuals engage in hostile or threatening verbal exchanges, including but not limited to yelling, name-calling, or use of offensive language.
- **Fighting:** A hostile encounter with another party or parties, resulting in physical struggle or contact, will be defined as a “fight”. Fighting will not be tolerated on the part of any participant, fan/spectator or leader associated with NJCPR events/activities. Officially sanctioned activities involving appropriate, consensual contact, such as boxing, karate, etc. are specifically excluded. Such activities require advance, written authorization from NJCPR.
- **Participants:** Individuals who are actively involved in programs or events organized by Nicholasville-Jessamine County Parks and Recreation or its affiliates.
- **Leaders/Staff:** Employees, coaches, volunteers, and any individual in a position of authority or responsibility within the Parks and Recreation programs or its affiliates.
- **Spectators/Fans:** Individuals who attend or observe programs or events organized by Nicholasville-Jessamine County Parks and Recreation or its affiliates.

Policy Statement

Nicholasville-Jessamine County Parks and Recreation is committed to promoting a safe and respectful environment for all. Physical and verbal altercations will not be tolerated and will be addressed promptly and fairly. All individuals involved in the Parks and Recreation programs or

on parks property are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that upholds the integrity and safety of the community.

Prohibited Conduct

The following behaviors are strictly prohibited within Nicholasville-Jessamine County Parks and Recreation programs and facilities:

- Engaging in physical altercations, including fighting, shoving, or any form of aggressive physical contact.
- Engaging in verbal altercations, including threatening language, derogatory remarks, or any form of verbal abuse.
- Encouraging or inciting others to participate in physical or verbal altercations.

Fighting:

1. Leaders/Staff

First Offense – (Adults 18 & Over) Lifetime suspension as a leader or participant in NJCPR Parks and Recreation activities/events from the date of the incident. One (1) year suspension as a fan in NJCPR Parks and Recreation activities/events from the date of the incident.

First Offense – (Youth 17 & Under) One (1) year suspension as a leader, participant and/or fan spectator from NJCPR events/activities from the date of the incident.

Second Offense – (Youth 17 & Under) Suspension as a leader, participant and/or fan spectator from NJCPR events/activities from the date of the incident until the age of eighteen (18) or for one (1) year, whichever is greater.

2. Participants

First Offense – (Adults 18 & Over) Lifetime suspension as a leader or participant in NJCPR Parks and Recreation activities/events. One (1) year suspension as a fan in NJCPR events/activities from the date of the incident.

Second Offense – (Youth: 17 & Under) Suspension as a leader, participant and/or fan/spectator from all NJCPR Parks and Recreation activities/events until the age of eighteen (18) or for one (1) year, whichever is greater.

3. Fans/Spectators

First Offense - One (1) year suspension as a fan/spectator and participant from NJCPR events/activities from the date of the incident. Lifetime prohibition from a leadership role in NJCPR events/activities.

Second Offense – Lifetime suspension as a fan/spectator, participant and leader from all NJCPR events/activities from the date of the incident.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct:

Good sportsmanship is the pillar of any sport. NJCPR strives to foster a positive environment that promotes and teaches participants/leaders/fans/spectators the value of good sportsmanship. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes, but is not limited to:

Verbal Abuse: The intentional act of insulting another individual through words, gestures, or other methods of communication that a reasonable person, similarly situated, would find offensive.

Inappropriate behavior: The use of obscene or inappropriate gestures, sounds, other communication or conduct a reasonable person would find offensive and/or inappropriate.

Bullying: A persistent pattern of mistreatment that causes harm or humiliation used in reference to an individual's race, religion, age, ethnicity, color, sex, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Use of Gender and/or Racial Epithets: The use of Gender and/or Racial Epithets used in reference to an individual's race, ethnicity, gender, color, gender identity, or their sexual orientation.

1. Leaders/Staff and/or Participants – (Adults 18 & over)

First Offense - One (1) year suspension as a leader/staff, participant, fan/spectator and participant from NJCPR events/activities from the date of the incident.

Second Offense - Lifetime suspension as a leader/staff and/or participant in NJCPR Parks and Recreation activities/events. One (1) year suspension as a fan/spectator from NJCPR events/activities from the date of the incident of the second offense.

2. Leaders/Staff and/or Participants – (17 & under)

First Offense – Immediate suspension as a leader/staff, participant, and/or fan/spectator from NJCPR events/activities from the date of the incident.

Second Offense - One (1) year suspension as a leader/staff, participant, fan/spectator, and participant from NJCPR events/activities from the date of the incident of the second offense.

Third Offense – Three (3) year suspension as a leader and/or participant in NJCPR Parks and Recreation activities/events. One (1) year suspension as a fan/spectator from NJCPR events/activities from the date of the incident.

Reporting Procedures

- **Immediate Action:** Any individual who witnesses or is involved in a physical or verbal altercation must report the incident immediately to the nearest staff member or official.
- **Staff Responsibility:** Leaders/staff who witness an altercation the nature of which, in their reasonable opinion, is beyond their ability to safely de-escalate, shall instead call 911 immediately and shall then report the incident to their supervisor or designated staff member.

- **Documentation:** The staff member or official making and/or receiving the report must document the incident in writing, including the names of all parties involved, witnesses, the nature of the altercation, and any immediate actions taken.
1. Individuals involved in the incident will be escorted from the park/facility at which the event/activity is occurring. During that time, the sporting event or program will be stopped until the involved party/parties have left the property. If a person(s) refuses to leave the premises, the Police will be contacted and asked to enforce the ruling of the officials.
 2. Individuals removed from the park or facility will be sent a notification letter stating their violation of the altercation policy. The individual will then have seven (7) days from the receipt date of the mailed letter to respond with a written statement, explaining or defending their involvement and setting out their perception of the altercations as it occurred.
 3. The response must be received by the Director's office for Nicholasville-Jessamine County Parks and Recreation (NJCPR) at the address provided in the notification letter. No written statement will be considered in the investigation after the seventh day.
 4. Once statements have been received as outlined above, an investigation will be conducted. NJCPR will make a judgement of the altercation within ten (10) working days from the statement deadline.
 5. The Director of Parks and Recreation along with supervisory staff of that program will oversee and conduct the investigation.
 6. The individual(s) accused of violation of this policy will be suspended from all events/activities during the investigation.
 7. Individuals found in violation of this policy, or who are not content with the panel's decision may file an appeal to the Director's office at Nicholasville-Jessamine County Parks & Recreation, 499. E Maple Street, Nicholasville, KY 40356. If the individual chooses to file an appeal, they will have five (5) business days to respond in writing from the notification of the decision, and the appeal must be received in the Director's office on or before, the fifth day after the notification of the decision. Individuals may be asked to appear in person before the committee.
 8. All appeal decisions are final and are not subject to review. If NJCPR deems a physical or verbal altercation as a flagrant and deliberate act of violence, Parks and Recreation reserves the right to enforce a more severe punishment within the established disciplinary code.

Investigation Process

- **Initial Assessment:** Upon receiving a report of a physical or verbal altercation, the staff member will conduct an initial assessment to determine the severity of the incident and whether immediate action is required.
- **Fact-Finding:** The staff members will conduct interviews with all parties involved, including witnesses, to gather a comprehensive understanding of the incident. Any available video or audio recordings will also be reviewed.

- **Determination:** Based on the findings, the staff members will determine if the altercation violated this policy and recommend appropriate disciplinary actions, if necessary.

Appeal Process

- **Right to Appeal:** Any individual subject to disciplinary action under this policy has the right to appeal the decision. See number 7 above.

Prevention Measures

- **Training:** All staff and volunteers will receive training on conflict resolution, de-escalation techniques, and the proper procedures for handling altercations.
- **Code of Conduct:** All participants, leaders/staff, and spectators/fans will be informed of the Code of Conduct at the beginning of each program or event, which includes expectations for behavior and the consequences of engaging in altercations. Copies of this policy will be provided to participants and posted on NJCPR's website located at www.njcpr.org.

Discretion Retained by NJCPR Board

The foregoing notwithstanding, the NJCPR Board of Directors retains the right, in its sole discretion, to impose more severe penalties where articulable aggravating factors exist, or to impose a more lenient penalty in circumstances under which articulable mitigating factors are found.

Trespass

On any occasion, if a participant, spectator/fan or other person, for lawful, articulable reasons, is asked by employees or official leadership of NJCPR to leave the premises but refuses to do so, said person shall be deemed to be trespassing and said employees or official leaders may call the police to request to have the trespassing person removed.

Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with applicable laws and best practices.

Contact Information

For questions or concerns about this policy, please contact the Nicholasville-Jessamine County Parks and Recreation office at 859-885-9787.

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