HANDBOOK OF POLICIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Welcome to Alchemy Volleyball Academy!

Our mission is multifaceted, but at its heart, it is about developing young, female athletes by creating a safe and structured environment where they can truly thrive and develop their skills to their fullest potential. Driven by a passion to uplift and empower, our non-profit is dedicated to reaching underprivileged girls and igniting their potential. Through partial and full funding, we open doors for them to discover and embrace the world of volleyball—not just as a sport, but as a powerful tool for personal growth and achievement. Our hope is to nurture a genuine love for the game, inspiring female athletes to pursue their dreams and soar to new heights, both on and off the court.

VISION

Alchemy Volleyball Academy (AVA) vision is to lead in developing female athletes to excel both on and off the court. Through our slogan, "***Transforming Talent. Embracing the Journey"*** we aim for athletes to embrace the learning journey rather than fearing mistakes and develop players both on and off the court through discipline, teamwork, positive mental health, and integrity. We strive to "***build a complete athlete"*** by teaching how to develop their skills while learning how to take care of their physical and mental health. We aim to create an exciting, inclusive community that inspires lifelong growth, nurture development, fosters discipline, and sets the standard for excellence in high
level competition.

GOALS

AVA focuses on developing young, female athletes from their early years (10-18 years old) with an emphasis on a structured development program. Our goals are to nurture and amplify these athletes' skills and mental health by guiding them to reach a highly competitive level while fostering their personal growth on and off the court through discipline, teamwork, integrity, and mental health support.

We are committed to providing a nationally competitive volleyball academy dedicated to excellence. This means offering quality coaches, comprehensive training, and a well-organized schedule designed to maximize exposure to collegiate coaches at the travel level. By doing so, we aim to give our young athletes the best opportunities to succeed both on and off the court.

HANDBOOK PURPOSE

The purpose for this handbook is to ensure all participants/athletes and their relatives/families understand AVA goals, rules, and expectations.

GENERAL BEHAVIOR POLICY

Alchemy Volleyball Academy will not tolerate hostile, aggressive confrontations by a parent towards an official, a director, a coach, an athlete, or another parent; this includes all social media platforms and group chats. Violation of this policy may result in the athlete being dismissed from the club. In such cases, no refunds will be issued.

It is inappropriate for an athlete or a parent to involve other AVA members (third parties) about a problem the athlete or parent is having with an AVA coach, objections to coaching decisions, or disagreements with an administrative decision.

Any member who, as a third party, hears remarks or stories being told about AVA, its employees or its policies, that cause the member to be concerned is encouraged to call the Director immediately to determine the facts, or to alert the club administration to a situation it may be unaware of.

AVA maintains the right to remove an athlete from the program at any time if their behavior or actions conflict with the standards and expectations of the club. Fees paid to date are non-refundable.

a. Athlete Responsibility and Behavior

Athletes are expected to participate with an **OPEN** and **POSITIVE** mind. It should be emphasized that **HARD WORK** and **FOCUS** are necessary to improve individually and as a team in volleyball. The club's goal is to provide a healthy environment where athletes can improve and excel under the pressures of team competition; certainly, a necessary life skill.

AVA understands the pressures of the school day on athletes and subsequently the hours necessary to succeed in school. The athlete is a student first and hence, we recommend the athlete's priority to be there. However, time management will be immensely useful to the student athlete and will be championed by every coach in the gym to plan out the time for volleyball as well.

Athletes must:

- Adhere to the USAV policies regarding drug and alcohol abuse. Consumption of alcohol and other drugs will not be tolerated, smoking of any kind, including but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, and marijuana will not be tolerated. If an athlete is participating in any kind of the activities listed above while he or she is competing away from home, he/she will be sent home immediately at his or her own expense.

- Vaping refers to the use of electronic nicotine delivery systems or electronic smoking devices. This e-cigarette policy prohibits the use of all electronic nicotine delivery systems (also known as e-cigarettes, e-cigars, e-hookahs, and

e-pipes) anywhere and at any time. Any player violating this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions.

- Follow all directions from coaches and staff.
- Use equipment properly.
- Always treat teammates, coaches, opponents with respect and practice good sportsmanship
- Use practice shirts to all practices.
- Bring all clean uniform pieces to all tournaments.
- Attend all scheduled tournaments.
- Not leave the tournament site until excused by the coach.
- Not use cell phones during practices or during tournament games, including working games.
- Complete the online scorekeeping certification and the referee certification. The training is helpful for all players to understand the game, and athletes should be able to work all positions required by the work team.

b. Parent/Relative Responsibilities and Behavior

The influence, both good and bad, that a parent can have on their child's introduction to or continuation in sports is often misunderstood or underestimated. Your valuable contribution to your athlete is appreciated by AVA.

In the CHRVA region, parents can be issued a **Purple Card** for disruptive behavior by the Referee. This card may lead to a sanction fee by the region. The parents receiving the card will be responsible for the fee.

- Be respectful of all facilities during practice and tournaments.
- Make only positive encouraging comments to or about players on **BOTH** teams.
- Remember that making mistakes is part of the learning process – don't criticize.
- Discuss your concerns away from the players and away from your child.

- Show respect for the officials, coaching staff, parents, and players.
- Control your emotions.
- Get interested in your child's sport. Ignorance is not bliss for those around you.
- Learn the rules of the game.
- Don't coach from the sidelines-don't coach at all.
- Get your athlete to games and practice on time. ***ON TIME IS LATE…***
- Don't allow your child to talk negatively about a teammate, a coach or an official **– stick with the facts, not the emotion**.
- Don't proliferate your child's negative behavior when they are discouraged. Help them realize the positive.

c. Grievance Procedure

Knowing when to communicate and how to communicate with your athlete's coach is a concern for almost every parent at some time during the season. Most often the concern is how to inquire about issues surrounding playing time.

Athletes are encouraged to talk to the coach when a problem arises (i.e. regarding playing time, position or unclear expectations in practice or competition). The appropriate manner for the athlete to approach the coach is to ask what she, the athlete, needs to do to receive more opportunities to play or to accomplish a goal.

Parents can best help their athlete by guiding them through this process and supporting communication with the coach. **Athletes should be the one to approach a coach regarding "coaching decisions", not the parents.** Coaching decisions include, among other things: practice organization, playing time, positions, substitutions, etc.

The amount an athlete is on the court is the result of a complex determination, in that coach's opinion, of the athlete's ability, the athlete's potential, the team's needs at the moment, and the team's needs in the future. Coaches will not be required to defend their thought process or conclusions in these determinations. It should be expected, however, that the coach be able to relay information to the athlete to explain the athlete's current role on the team and what the athlete needs to improve upon to resolve the concern.

The athletes and parents ***SHOULD:***

1. Contact the coach ***no earlier than 48 hours after*** the incident or completion of competition, to ask for a meeting time.

2. Expect meetings to be at a location other than a tournament.

3. Expect that the initial meeting will be held between the coaches and the player.

4. If the concern remains unresolved, approach the coach to ask for an additional meeting time to be set. This meeting can be between the athlete, the coaches, and the parents.

5. If the concern remains unresolved, the parent should contact the AVA Director for intervention.

The parents or athletes ***SHOULD NOT*:**

1. Confront a coach during practice or during tournaments.

2. Expect meetings to be set during practice or tournament participation.

3. Attempt to "compare" or evaluate another athlete.

4. Use profanity towards the coach.

5. Harass or threaten the coach.

6. Discuss their concerns with any other parents or players.

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSABILITIES

It is AVA's goal that expectations and responsibilities for all athletes and families are understood and acknowledged.

a. Tryouts and Team Selections

AVA tryouts are for all levels of athletes. Athletes are evaluated for skill execution, as well as athletic capabilities and potential. We select athletes for teams based on the following non-prioritized criteria: athletic ability for volleyball, athletic potential, work ethic, drive, willingness to be coached, competitive attitude, and skill ability.

All athletes are evaluated yearly and must attend tryouts to be considered for a team. Even if an athlete has played on a travel team the previous season, she will not be automatically selected for next year. If an athlete has a limiting physical or medical condition, she should talk with the Executive Director or Head Coach prior to the start of the tryout period.

You will need to register with AVA **and** USAV before you are able to attend tryouts. Please see the "**Tryout Page**" on our website for a complete description of the

necessary steps that need to be taken before trying out.

b. The Multi-Sport Athlete

Many players are multi-sport athletes who compete in two or more sports at one time. Conflicts are to be worked out well in advance – **at least two weeks prior to a conflict**–with your coaches. However, for our national teams, we expect AVA to be your first priority for all non-school related activities.

We **DO NOT** discourage travel team athletes from participating in another sport during our season; however, it is important to be aware of the physical demands and the time commitments required of these athletes. Safe participation is a primary concern. We have placed many athletes on teams who play another sport and do believe in cross training. However, each athlete needs to be aware of her own limitations to stay healthy and injury free.

c. Team Practices

Practice facilities for each team can be found on our website. See "**Practice Locations**" under the " **Teams**" tab on our website.

The practice schedule can differ due to school gym conflicts and team schedules. Coaches will send teams a practice calendar, but you should **ALWAYS** check your email and/or SportsEngine before going to practice in case of any last-minute changes.

d. Practice Policies

Practice will begin at the scheduled time and with the assigned AVA practice shirt. Players should take care of putting on shoes, knee pads, ankle braces, net set up, taping, etc., **no later than 15 minutes before the start time of practice**. If you are going to be late for practice, the athlete should contact the coach directly at an approximate arrival time. AVA goal of maintaining healthy athletes includes the appropriate stretching and warm up time. Remember, **ON TIME, IS LATE!**

If an athlete cannot practice, she should call the coach directly. Injured athletes who can attend school are expected to come to practice. Even if you cannot participate physically, there is a lot that can be learned through observing and listening to the coach.

e. Uniforms

All athletes are required to purchase specific AVA uniform, gear, and equipment.

If, during the season, any piece of an athlete's uniform or equipment becomes lost or damaged, it must be immediately replaced by the athlete's family.

Requirements may change from year to year based on supplier availability. There is no guarantee that a uniform piece will remain an approved garment for your entire AVA

career or that an athlete's number may conflict the following season, resulting in the need to purchase new jerseys.

f. Tournaments and Travel

Players are expected to attend all scheduled tournaments. Scheduling conflicts should be brought to the attention of the coach at the beginning of the year. Conflicts may result in the athlete's court time being affected as the team prepares during practices leading up to an event. Missed events do not constitute a reimbursement of the participants' fees.

Playing time for athletes is determined by the performance of the athlete during practices and previous matches and is left to the discretion of the coach. Playing time issues can be addressed with coaches 48 hours after a tournament.

Proper demeanor is expected of all members of the Club (athletes, parents, and supporters); this includes treating members of the officiating crew with respect.

Only AVA uniform pieces will be worn during tournaments.

- All uniform pieces must be brought to tournaments.
- Uniforms must be clean.
- Athletes may not leave the tournament site until excused by the coach.
- Be respectful of referees and work teams.
- Do not address playing time issues at tournaments. This should be done through contacting the coach for a meeting time, no earlier than 48 hours after the last day of completion.

i. In-Region Tournaments

All teams will participate in the CHRVA regional tournaments. This will help teams gain experience at the regional level, gain seeding statistics for other regional events, and fosters team/club unity. These tournaments will take place on either Saturday and/or Sunday and will not require any missed days of school.

ii. Travel Tournaments

Travel tournaments are usually 2 or 3-day tournaments that require teams to stay overnight out of town. These tournaments will help teams gain national level experience, seeding and exposing athletes to collegiate coaches. Based on area and age divisions, some teams have an opportunity to participate in a few of these tournaments.

Some tournaments **MAY** require missed school days depending on individual school schedules. This includes several holiday weekends including MLK, President's weekend, Spring Break, Memorial weekend, and others, and may require missed school

on a Friday or Monday. These events are often scheduled on holidays to minimize missed days of school. Athletes are expected to report to their team the night before competition and notify their schools and teachers per individual school policy. Teams will participate in matches all days of the competition.

Post season travel tournaments (Nationals or AAU Championships), are typically 4 days long and take place in early summer. Athletes must plan to attend the summer practices and tournaments.

iii. Team Officiating

Officiating is the shared responsibility of the entire team. All athletes are required to stay in the tournament when the team is assigned to officiate. The officiating duties are line judging, score keeping, libero tracking, score flipping, and R1/R2 officiating. Coaches will provide further information regarding scorekeepers and officiating online clinics. Completing the scoring/officiating is the responsibility of the player, including official evaluations and mailing in completed paperwork to the region as stated on their website.

iv. Travel Policies

Violation of any travel policy may result in the athlete being sent home immediately at the expense of the parent/guardian. Further action by the club will follow.

- Athletes will be courteous and respectfully obey all staff members. This includes all coaches, chaperones, and adults officially traveling with the team.
- An athlete who damages any property at a lodging or playing facility will be personally responsible for damages.
- Athletes must always dress appropriately.
- Athletes found in possession of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs will be sent home immediately at the expense of the parent/guardian. Further action by the club will follow.

v. Travel Arrangements

All travel arrangements and accommodation for the season will be the responsibility of the athletes' families and/or guardians. The club will only book hotel rooms for coaching staff.

If the event is a Stay to Play tournament, athletes' families and/or guardians are **required** to book hotels through the link provided by the tournament or AVA administration. Teams that fail to meet the Stay to Play requirements will not be permitted to participate in the tournament.

- Player travel to and from the tournament is the responsibility of the parent or

guardian.

- The player and family are entirely responsible for the player's welfare in the travel process.

- The Player and family are responsible for transporting the player from the airport to hotel and vice versa.

It is mandatory for the player to arrive at the hotel on time for the team meeting which is determined by the coach.

ASSUMPTION OF RISK

Volleyball and athletic training involve physical exertion and unpredictable circumstances. The risks listed below and others may occur even with proper supervision and safety precautions. P articipation involves various risks such as:

- Collision among players, balls, equipment, or floors.
- Falls, sprains, concussions, or overuse injuries.
- Dehydration, heat-related illness, or sudden cardiac events.
- Emotional stress from competitive play or feedback.
- Exposure to illness or contagious disease in shared spaces.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL DISCLOSURE

I certify that the athlete is physically able to take part in all officials with respect to AVA activities.

I certify that I have disclosed any known and undiagnosed medical conditions that might affect the safe participation, including allergies, heart conditions, orthopedic issues, or other relevant concerns.

I understand that it is my responsibility to update AVA immediately, if health changes occur.

MENTAL COACHING SERVICES

At Alchemy Volleyball Academy, we coach through a holistic lens emphasizing teamwork, resilience, and personal growth through physical and mental health transformation in an environment where every individual, whether coach, athlete, parent, or family member, feels included and valued. We aim at providing the athletes with an environment free of judgement where they learn to advocate for one another, support each other’s growth, and achieve individual and collective goals.

Mental coaching is for aspirational, educational, and informational purposes only and should not be construed as professional psychological advice, medical advice, mental health treatment, or a substitute for psychotherapy, psychiatric care, counseling, crisis intervention, or other mental health care.

Mental Coaching provided by Dr. Nicole Joseph is intended to help athletes develop performance-related skills such as confidence, focus, resilience, motivation, emotional regulation, communication, leadership, goal setting, and other sport-performance skills.

I understand that Mental Coaching by Dr. Nicole Joseph does not constitute a professional psychological relationship between my child and Dr. Nicole Joseph. I am aware that Dr. Nicole Joseph is not acting as a psychologist for my athlete, myself, or my family and is not providing professional therapy, psychological assessment, diagnosis, treatment, counseling, or other mental health services.

I understand and agree that participation in Mental Coaching activities does not create a psychologist-patient, therapist-patient, physician-patient, counselor-client, fiduciary, or other professional treatment relationship between Dr. Nicole Joseph and the Athlete, parent, guardian, or family members. No diagnosis, treatment plan, psychotherapy, counseling services, psychological evaluation, or mental health treatment will be provided as part of these services.

I understand that Dr. Nicole Joseph does not provide emergency mental health care, crisis intervention services, suicide risk management services, or on-call mental health services for my athlete, myself, or my family.

If my athlete experiences a mental health crisis, suicidal thoughts, self-harm concerns, threats of harm to others, severe emotional distress, or any other psychiatric emergency, I agree to seek immediate assistance through appropriate emergency resources. Emergency resources include:

- Call 911 if there is an immediate threat to safety.
- Contact your local emergency room.
- Fairfax Inova Emergency Room: 703-776-4001 (request the psychiatrist on call).
- Call, text, or chat the National Suicide Crisis Lifeline at 988.

I understand that I remain solely responsible for obtaining appropriate medical, psychological, psychiatric, counseling, educational, or other professional services for my athlete when needed.

If Dr. Nicole Joseph believes that the Athlete may benefit from professional mental health services, she may recommend that the parent seek evaluation or treatment from a licensed mental health provider. Such a recommendation does not create a treatment relationship and does not oblige Dr. Nicole Joseph to provide services beyond the scope of Mental Coaching.

I acknowledge that participation in Mental Coaching activities is voluntary. I understand that individual outcomes cannot be guaranteed and that results may vary among participants.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, I release, waive, and discharge Dr. Nicole Joseph, Alchemy Volleyball Academy, their officers, directors, employees, contractors, agents, volunteers, and affiliates from any and all claims, demands, causes of action, damages, liabilities, losses, costs, or expenses arising out of or relating to participation in Mental Coaching activities, except to the extent prohibited by applicable law. I understand that no guarantees, warranties, or representations regarding specific athletic, academic, emotional, or personal outcomes have been made.

I understand that Mental Coaching is not psychotherapy, counseling, or mental health treatment. Accordingly, communications between the Athlete and Dr. Nicole Joseph is not protected by psychologist-patient privilege and may not be afforded the same confidentiality protections that apply in a therapeutic relationship.

While Dr. Nicole Joseph will make reasonable efforts to respect the privacy of participants and maintain appropriate professional boundaries, I understand that Mental Coaching services are educational and performance-oriented in nature and are not intended to create confidential treatment records.

I understand that Dr. Nicole Joseph may communicate with Alchemy Volleyball Academy staff, coaches, parents, guardians, or other appropriate individuals regarding scheduling, participation, attendance, behavioral concerns, safety issues, team-related matters, or other matters reasonably related to the Athletes' participation in Mental Coaching activities.

Nothing in this agreement shall prevent Dr. Nicole Joseph from disclosing information when she reasonably believes disclosure is necessary to protect the safety of the Athlete or others, to comply with applicable law, court order, subpoena, mandatory reporting obligations, or other legal requirements.

I understand that Mental Coaching may be provided in a group, team, clinic, camp, workshop, classroom, or other shared setting involving multiple athletes and participants.

I acknowledge that comments, questions, observations, experiences, and discussions shared during group Mental Coaching activities may be heard by other participants. As a result, complete confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

I understand that Dr. Nicole Joseph cannot control or guarantee how other participants may use, repeat, or disclose information shared during group activities.

I agree to encourage my Athlete to exercise discretion when discussing personal, family, medical, psychological, or other sensitive matters during group sessions.

By permitting my Athlete to participate, I consent to participation in group discussions, team-based exercises, and other Mental Coaching activities that may involve interaction with other athletes and coaches.

CERTIFICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I hereby certify that the information provided herein is being done directly by myself or by me, as the legal guardian representing a minor, and that is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also understand and agree that incomplete or false information is grounds for denial of membership.

If the applicant is under 18, I hereby bind myself, the minor, and all other assignments to the terms of the Agreement and Release. I represent that I have legal capacity and authority to act for and on behalf of the minor named herein, and I agree to indemnify and hold harmless the persons or entities named in the Agreement and Release for any claims or liabilities assessed against them as a result of any insufficiency of my legal capacity or authority to act for and on behalf of the minor in the execution of the Agreement and Release. I fully consent to my child's participation in all events with Alchemy Volleyball Academy.

Applicant Signature Date

Parent/Guardian Print Name _____ Date_____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Athlete Print Name _____ Date_____

Athlete Signature _____