



West Virginia Vipers

Disciplinary Policy & Procedures

Effective: 2025 Season

1. Purpose

The West Virginia Vipers (“the Vipers”) is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and competitive environment for all players, coaches, officials, volunteers, families, and opponents. This Disciplinary Policy establishes standards of conduct and provides uniform procedures for addressing violations. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all disciplinary matters are managed fairly, consistently, and in a manner that upholds the integrity of the Vipers.

2. Guiding Principles

The administration and enforcement of this Policy shall be guided by the following principles:

- **Player Safety First:** The physical, emotional, and psychological safety of all participants is paramount and non-negotiable.
- **Respect & Sportsmanship:** All individuals are expected to exhibit the highest standard of behavior both on and off the ice.
- **Accountability:** All members assume responsibility for their conduct. Each individual represents the Vipers and is expected to do so with integrity.
- **Consistency & Fairness:** Disciplinary actions will follow a structured, uniform process.
- **Compliance with Governing Bodies:** All actions will comply with applicable USA Hockey, MidAm District, and league rules and disciplinary requirements.

3. Code of Conduct

The standards below apply to all players, coaches, team personnel, parents, guardians, and volunteers participating in Vipers activities.

3.1 On-Ice Behavior

- No fighting, attempts to injure, or dangerous play.
- No verbal abuse, taunting, or threatening language toward opponents, teammates, coaches, or officials.
- All referee decisions must be respected; arguing or confrontational behavior is prohibited.
- Penalties shall be accepted without protest.

3.2 Off-Ice & Locker Room Conduct

- Zero tolerance for bullying, hazing, intimidation, harassment, or discriminatory behavior.
- Locker rooms must be maintained in a clean and orderly condition; all rink property must be respected.
- Horseplay or conduct likely to cause injury or damage is prohibited.
- Dress code and arrival-time requirements for games and practices must be followed.

3.3 Communication & Social Media

- Negative, disparaging, or inflammatory posts about teammates, opponents, officials, or coaches are prohibited.
- Posting inappropriate content or sharing confidential or private team information is not permitted.

3.4 Coaches & Volunteers

Coaches and volunteers shall comply with all Vipers and USA Hockey policies and must:

- Maintain all required certifications and clearances.
- Model appropriate conduct and communication at all times.
- Ensure that only authorized, rostered coaches are permitted behind the bench.
- Prioritize player safety and respect in all decisions.

3.5 Parents & Spectators

- Abusive or hostile language, arguing with officials, or engaging in unsportsmanlike behavior is prohibited.
 - Parents may not approach the bench, locker room, or restricted team areas without explicit permission.
 - Parents are expected to reinforce positive conduct and discourage negative behaviors in their players.
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4. Types of Infractions

Infractions are categorized into three levels to ensure consistent and proportional discipline.

4.1 Level I – Minor Infractions

Examples include:

- Tardiness or unexcused absence.
- Failure to comply with locker room or team rules.
- Minor disrespectful behavior.

Potential Consequences:

- Verbal or written warning.
 - Meeting with coach or administrator.
 - Temporary restriction of team privileges.
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4.2 Level II – Moderate Infractions

Examples include:

- Repeated Level I offenses.
- Disrespectful behavior toward teammates, staff, or officials.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct.
- Inappropriate or harmful social media activity.

Potential Consequences:

- Team-imposed game suspension.
 - Behavioral contract.
 - Mandatory parent meeting.
 - Probationary status.
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4.3 Level III – Major Infractions (Zero Tolerance)

Examples include:

- Fighting or attempt-to-injure penalties.
- Bullying, harassment, or discriminatory behavior.
- Physical altercations off the ice.
- Abuse toward officials.
- Participating while suspended or engaging in roster fraud.
- Coach misconduct, including unauthorized personnel behind the bench.

Potential Consequences:

- Immediate suspension from team activities.
 - Mandatory USA Hockey disciplinary hearings.
 - Removal from the Travel team and the Vipers.
 - Loss of leadership positions.
 - Permanent expulsion from the program if warranted.
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5. Disciplinary Procedures

All disciplinary matters shall follow the procedures below to ensure fairness, documentation, and transparency.

5.1 Incident Reporting

Incidents may be reported by coaches, administrators, officials, parents, or players (peer reporting is encouraged).

Reports should be submitted within 24 hours and must include:

- Date, time, and location of the incident.
 - Names of all individuals involved.
 - A detailed description of the conduct.
 - Witness statements, where applicable.
 - Video evidence (e.g., LiveBarn) when available.
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5.2 Initial Review

The following individuals may conduct an initial review:

- Bryce Timberlake- President
- Alex Shrady- Vice President
- Shirley Harris- Discipline Board Member (Scheduler)
- Head Coach (as appropriate)

The review may include:

1. Collection of statements from involved parties.
 2. Review of game sheets, USA Hockey incident reports, and other documentation.
 3. Verification of facts before any disciplinary determination is made.
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5.3 Disciplinary Decision

The Vipers will:

- First, apply all USA Hockey and league-mandated sanctions.
- Impose additional Vipers discipline as deemed appropriate.
- Provide written notice of disciplinary decisions to the player and/or family.

Factors considered include:

- Severity of the conduct.
 - Intent.
 - Prior history of incidents.
 - Impact on individuals or the team.
 - Safety concerns.
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6. Suspension Guidelines

- Players receiving a USA Hockey Match or Game Misconduct penalty are automatically suspended from all USA Hockey-sanctioned games until cleared through the appropriate hearing panel.
 - The Vipers strictly enforce all USA Hockey suspensions across all teams, including high school and travel.
 - A player may not serve a suspension with a team on which they are not rostered.
 - The Vipers reserves the right to impose supplemental suspensions beyond those required by governing bodies.
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7. Hearings & Appeals

Players or parents may appeal the Vipers-imposed suspensions.

7.1 Appeal Process

- Appeals must be submitted in writing within **48 hours** of receiving the disciplinary decision.
 - The Review Board will convene within **7 days** of receiving the request.
 - Decisions of the Review Board are final at the Vipers level.
 - USA Hockey sanctions cannot be appealed to or overturned by the Vipers.
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8. Coach & Staff Misconduct

If a coach or volunteer engages in prohibited conduct, including but not limited to:

- Violating Vipers or USA Hockey conduct standards;
- Misrepresenting a player's identity;
- Entering the bench without authorization;
- Engaging in abusive, inappropriate, or unsafe behavior;

The Vipers may impose any of the following actions:

- Immediate removal from the bench or practices;
 - Mandatory retraining or recertification;
 - Suspension from the Vipers activities;
 - Reporting to the USA Hockey Coach-in-Chief;
 - Permanent removal from the program.
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9. Leadership Positions

Team Captains and Alternate Captains must adhere to exemplary standards of conduct. Any major infraction, repeated misconduct, or behavior inconsistent with Vipers' values may result in:

- Temporary removal of the "C" or "A";
 - Permanent revocation of leadership status.
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10. Restorative Measures & Player Support

The Vipers emphasize education and growth. When appropriate, players may be required to:

- Complete a sportsmanship or leadership development assignment;
 - Issue a formal apology to affected parties;
 - Participate in a team or mediation meeting;
 - Meet with administrators to review expectations;
 - Complete community service or rink-related service.
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11. Parent Acknowledgment

All families must:

- Review this Policy annually;
- Sign the Vipers Code of Conduct form;
- Support Coaches and Vipers staff in enforcing discipline;
- Understand that refusal to comply may result in removal from the program.

12. Commitment to a Safe and Positive Environment

The West Virginia Vipers believe that discipline, respect, and accountability form the foundation of a successful program. By establishing clear expectations and consistent procedures, the Vipers ensure that every player has the opportunity to develop both as an athlete and as a responsible member of the community.

WV Vipers Player & Parent Acknowledgment Form

Disciplinary and Procedures Policy

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have received, reviewed, and fully understand the **WV Vipers Disciplinary and Procedures Policy**. I agree to abide by all guidelines, expectations, and consequences outlined within the policy.

I understand that participation in the WV Vipers Hockey Club is a privilege, and that all players are expected to uphold the highest standards of conduct, sportsmanship, and responsibility both on and off the ice.

I further acknowledge that failure to follow the policy may result in corrective action, suspension, or removal from the program as determined by the coaching staff and program administration.

Player Name: _____

Player Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____
