



## NTCA CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARTICIPATING GROUPS

NTCA feels it is essential to enforce a Code of Conduct for groups participating in any NTCA sanctioned event. If employees, independent contractors, and volunteers are expected to adhere to a professional code of conduct, then it is appropriate that this standard is expected from participating groups as well.

### **Definitions:**

**Participant:** A person who is performing with a participating group.

**Staff:** A person who is engaged by a participating group in an instructional or administrative capacity.

**Volunteer:** A person who gives of their time freely to a participating group as a chaperone or provides support in any capacity.

All groups participating in any NTCA sanctioned event must accept and act under the policies and procedures outlined within this Code of Conduct. Failure to accept in either written or verbal form does not absolve a Participating Group from following this Code of Conduct.

NTCA will not tolerate conduct that impacts negatively on the organization or the experience of our performers. All participants, staff, and volunteers should consider themselves as ambassadors of NTCA. All parties are not only expected to uphold these policies, but help remind others of them when necessary.

Further, NTCA reserves the right to discipline, discharge or suspend participants, staff or volunteer who engages in or is alleged to have engaged in unlawful activity at a NTCA sanctioned event to the extent consistent with applicable law.

### **ALCOHOL & CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

NTCA participants have the right to participate in an environment free of alcohol and controlled substances. NTCA participants are not to possess, distribute or be under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances including, but not limited to, narcotics, inhalants, marijuana or other dangerous drugs. It is unlawful to bring alcohol and controlled substances onto any school grounds and most arena facilities.

### **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

NTCA strictly prohibits all conduct which could pose a threat to the safety of participants of a NTCA sanctioned event. If the participating group receives information of any kind (oral or written, "informal" or "formal") suggesting that misconduct has occurred that is connected in any way to individuals or activities associated with the participating group, and if the suggested misconduct meets any of the following criteria, then participating group shall inform NTCA of the information in writing immediately:

- Any misconduct of a sexual nature or potentially classifiable as a sex offense under applicable law, including without limitation so-called "victimless" activities such as prostitution, pornography, and indecent exposure.
- Any misconduct in which actual or suggested sexual relations is an element.
- Any harassing conduct pertaining to, in whole or in part, an individual's sex, gender, sexual orientation, or gender expression.
- Any conduct involving harm to a minor. Participating groups shall maintain effective internal policies and procedures for the protection and safety of its participants, staff, and volunteers, including without limitation the ability of any individual to report suspected misconduct to the leadership of the participating group without reprisal.

Participating group shall conduct an effective internal investigation, report the matter to the appropriate external authorities as may be necessary, and take appropriate and effective remedial action under the circumstances.

Anyone found to have participated in misconduct that threatens the safety of a participant will be disciplined as NTCA finds appropriate, up to and including a permanent ban from association with any NTCA-sanctioned event in any capacity.

## **HARASSMENT**

Behavior that may be considered inappropriate or may be deemed as harassment is not allowed. Harassment refers to a full spectrum of offensive behavior. When the term is used in a legal sense, it refers to actions that can be found to be threatening or disturbing, and beyond those that are sanctioned by society. Conduct that creates a hostile environment is prohibited. Such conduct may include:

- Any harassing behavior about, in whole or in part, an individual's sex, gender, sexual orientation or gender expression
- Repeated unwanted sexual flirtations, advances, or propositions
- Verbal abuse of a sexual nature
- Verbal comments about an individual's body
- Sexually degrading words used to describe an individual
- Unwanted physical contact
- Cyber-bullying or social media abuse
- Any other behavior that is not socially acceptable in a professional environment

Any participant, staff or volunteer who is found after an appropriate investigation to have harassed another participant, staff, employee, contractor, volunteer, or customer of NTCA will be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions, including suspension.

## **ANTI-RETALIATION AND WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

In an effort to protect all interested parties and address our commitment to integrity and ethical behavior, NTCA will not tolerate any retaliation against anyone who makes a good faith report, or threatens to make a good faith report, regarding NTCA, another organization, or an individual, whose suspected violation of the law or other violation endangers the health or safety of a participant, any personnel of NTCA or a participating group, or the general public.

## **GENERAL CONDUCT**

Our reputation depends on the conduct of all parties involved in NTCA. Good manners, courtesy, and common sense are generally all that is required to ensure appropriate conduct and behavior. Conduct or language that could be perceived by a reasonable person as being rude, inappropriate, abusive, disorderly, derogatory, immoral or threatening will not be tolerated.

If an undue and unfair pressure is applied to NTCA judges or staff through inappropriate behavior, then this places the competitive experience at risk. Examples include, but are not limited to, participants or staff of a group verbally abusing NTCA personnel, the inappropriate conduct of any participants or staff on the contest floor, or inordinate or unauthorized communication to judges or the Chief Judge.

Disruptive or rude behavior from participants, staff, or volunteers of one group towards another in the warm-up areas will not be tolerated.

Anyone found to have participated in misconduct will be disciplined as NTCA finds appropriate, up to and including loss of the privilege that has been violated. For example, staff could lose all critique privileges with judges, barred from contest floor or venue, or loss of the right to use the warm-up venue.

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING**

NTCA respects the right to use social networking sites and does not wish to discourage from self-publishing or self-expression. Nevertheless, we expect all involved in NTCA to follow applicable guidelines and policies. All persons using social media should be clear that any posts are their own and they are not authorized to speak on behalf of NTCA.

Our policies prohibit the use of social media to post or display comments that are vulgar, obscene, threatening, intimidating, harassing, or hostile on account of race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, marital status, physical or mental disability, or any other basis or characteristic protected by applicable law on platforms controlled by NTCA.

## **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Individual participants, staff, or volunteers who are found to be in violation of this Code of Conduct will be subject to further investigation as conducted by NTCA Executive Board. Based on the circumstances considered, the decision to apply disciplinary action or dismissal can be at the sole discretion of the President.

In extreme circumstances, termination of a group's participation in NTCA may be considered if after a thorough investigation finds their management has recklessly or continually put participants, staff, or volunteers in unsafe situations or ignored flagrant violations of this Code of Conduct.

The type of action taken depends on the facts and circumstances surrounding each situation. Please note that the corrective action may vary, or steps skipped, depending on the circumstance. It's important to note that the type of action applied, as well as any prior notice of action, is at NTCA's sole discretion.

The policies of this Code of Conduct should provide all participants, staff, and volunteers with an understanding of what is considered appropriate or inappropriate behavior. While all possible circumstances are impossible to delineate, those participating with NTCA should not take any chance with the spirit and intent of these guidelines.