 **AMHERST SOCCER ASSOCIATION**

**Parent and Player Agreement**

This agreement outlines the responsibilities between the player, the parents, the coach, and **AMHERST SOCCER ASSOCIATION** ("ASA"). Before making the decision to join ASA**,** the player and parents should read and understand the personal, financial and time commitments that are needed to be a part of a travel team. Much more information can be found on the website under Travel FAQ.

**Team Tryouts**

Team tryouts will be held annually for players who meet the age requirements for a team under consideration. The club will announce team tryouts to inform the public of specific tryout dates and times and each prospect will be given an opportunity to make the team. If the club deems it necessary, additional tryouts may be held at any time and qualified players not committed to any viable team currently entered in State, Regional, or National competition may be added to the team at any time, roster space permitting.

Besides the scheduled tryout period, evaluations can also take place during the competitive soccer season (practices, scrimmages, and especially regulation games). The team coach and Technical Director reserve the right to make decisions on selections after the first evaluation period or to ask certain prospects to remain after the announced tryout dates. ASA makes decisions on player selections based solely on their best judgment and final authority for placement will fall to the Technical Director. No other criteria (including a parent’s position in the club, friendships, personal relationships, and financial contributions to the club or team) will be used to evaluate the player and decisions made by the Director are final. Finally, during the tryout evaluation period, please give ASA the consideration to inform us whether or not you plan to accept the offer to join the team if asked to do so in a timely manner. You will receive and accept or decline email in most instances within 10-20 days of the tryout scheduled.

**Player Responsibilities**

You are not under any pressure to join ASA. Instead, we hope that each family considers all options and chooses what will be best for the player, taking into consideration the player’s goals and aspirations as a person and as a soccer player. Please take the time to speak to others in the club, review our FAQ on the website and our mission as a Community Club Program.

SOCCER MUST BE YOUR PRIMARY SPORT OR ACTIVITY FROM MAY TO AUGUST DURING OUR OUTDOOR SEASON. We ask our coaches to be more understanding during other sport conflicts during the winter season. Once you commit to join ASA, you agree to abide by the policies of the club and your team; each player is expected to make a full commitment to the team for an entire season. An entire season is defined as the period between November 1 and August 6. 75% or better attendance must be maintained over the course of this period. Schedule your vacations to avoid conflicts and/or give the coach many months of notice of an absence for family reasons. Players that leave for the extended periods in the summer for personal reasons are not deemed to be honoring this commitment and this will be considered for future placement and playing time. Commitment to a club level travel team, such as ASA, is a responsibility, and the player is expected to continue to be dedicated to the team regardless of the team’s results/record, playing time, or personal relationships within the team. Each player is responsible for his or her own performance and conduct. A positive team attitude, a sense of sportsmanship, and fair play are important to maintain throughout the season.

Once a commitment is made to the club, the club will be ethical and honest, honoring its commitment to the players and their families. No player will be released from a team during the soccer season unless it is for disciplinary reasons or failure to fulfill club financial obligations.

Players should be proud to wear the club colors and promote sportsmanship and camaraderie with other players in the club, refrain from any trash-talking, not post derogatory items on social media, and realize there are logical consequences for not following club or team rules.

**Uniform and Equipment Policy**

In order to promote club and team unity, each player is expected to arrive at games and practices wearing the appropriate team gear with the “ASA” logo and all equipment ready to play. No apparel from other travel clubs should be worn at any ASA event.

**Practices and Games, Team Travel**

During the soccer season, the team and its players participate in practices, league competition, tournaments, and possibly State competition. The team coach will make decisions on player selection, game lineup, player positions, playing time, tournament participation, and team management. The only exceptions to playing time will be a local league requirement that all players 9 through 12 be given playing time 50% of the game (s). This may fluctuate over time from game to game but, coaches will try to maintain this policy over the season. A player and the family must be positive in fulfilling the role the player is asked to perform for the team at any given moment including coming off the bench, playing a different position, or participating in team functions.

From the designated arrival time at all practices and games, a player is expected to concentrate on soccer. Players must arrive on time with the required equipment (cleats**,** uniform, sufficient water, soccer ball, shin guards, etc.) and be ready to practice or play. Since practicing and playing their best requires a player's undivided attention, there should be no visiting between the player and his or her family members, friends, pets, or others that might cause a player to lose focus on soccer from immediately before the practice or game until dismissed by the coach (this includes halftime and at the conclusion of games). When team responsibilities are complete, the player is free to join family and friends.

**Parent Responsibilities**

Parent support and investment in their player and ASA is essential. Since our club is dependent upon qualified parent coaches and willing volunteers, a player’s commitment must be accompanied by a parental commitment as well. The parent’s role is to support the player, coach, and team in developing a fun, growth-oriented environment, which includes ensuring that the player attends all practices, games, and meetings. In addition, to help each player perform at their best, parents should ensure each player is properly rested, hydrated, and properly nourished. Parents are expected to volunteer to support our annual tournament in their team responsibilities. Please remember:

* ASA’s first concern is long-term development of your child
* Player Development is given greater priority than wins
* Competition is important and will be encouraged at games and practices
* Encourage your child to talk with the coaches about any issue, including missing a game or practice, playing time, improvement, positions, etc.

**Parent Conduct During and After Games**

Parents are encouraged to help players emotionally during games. This refers to any and all encouragement to support the players to overcome fatigue, adversity, or the individual or collective competition on the day. However, please refrain from providing technical or tactical advice or commands from the sideline to any player on the team. A team must develop their soccer identity from the instructions of the coach, and any tactical or technical advice you may provide could conflict with the wishes of the coach. Also of note is the fact that youth players are all developing cognitively at different rates, and shouting instructions at them could most certainly distract them from solving the game in space and time, as most young people are not able to multi-task like adults. Finally, allowing the players to make mistakes is part of the learning process. Just like you would not want to sit in the back of a classroom and shout math answers during a test at school, please allow the players to play the game without giving them adult answers no matter how right you think you may be. We strive to develop players that can solve the game on their own, and having them make their own decisions is an essential part of player development. No parent shall address any player on the opposing team or any of the officials for any reason whatsoever.

Our players will be encouraged to have a strong mentality to focus on the next most important task at hand. This means overcoming adverse conditions such as a poor referee decision, any unsportsmanlike behavior by the opponent or their sidelines, a poor playing surface, bad weather, etc. Our coaches will encourage our players to rise above, and we ask that parents set a positive example by doing the same.

Soccer is the best sport in the world, and a big reason for this is that the emotions of a soccer game can be extreme. In the heat of the moment, we ask that parents conduct themselves in a manner that will show support for the team even when disagreeing with a coaching decision. This is a great example to provide your player. If you have questions about your player, please contact your coach to set up a time to have a conversation either in person or by phone. We have a **48 hour** “cooling off” policy on game day, which means that we ask all parents to wait 48 hours before discussing concerns from the previous game. Each coach is working to develop each of their players technically, tactically, mentally, and physically, and having a positive working relationship between parents and the coach will be beneficial for the development of the individuals and the team. After you have discussed with the coach, feel free to contact the Travel Coordinators if you are not satisfied with the outcome. If a parent becomes a distraction or disruption to the team’s progress, they will be subject to disciplinary action by the BOD and can include removal from the club. The State governing body has a ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY that all member clubs, coaches and families must follow. Please take a moment to read the policy on our website.

**Volunteering**

We depend upon volunteers to operate effectively. Running the annual Amherst International Memorial tournament, as well as supporting try-outs, field & goal set up and breakdown, maintenance and other club-wide events require hundreds of volunteer hours each year before, during and after the events. Families are expected to support the club through volunteering **at least 2-3 hours per family** per year. This is expected to take place during the tournament weekend. Additional volunteer hours are needed during field setup, social events or other needs throughout the year. You can also offer to help support your team and coach by volunteering for manager, treasurer, AIM representative, social coordinator, and other time contributions.

**Coach Responsibilities**

Our coaching goal is to promote a fun, growth-oriented environment where players are given the best tools and skills to enable them to become their best in terms of ability, desire, and performance. Coaches are responsible to outline team expectations, follow the ASA development plan for skill development, and direct practices and games in a professional and positive manner.

Over time, a coach can communicate with players in different ways. There are times when the team coach will say very little, and times when they may shout out instructions. There are also times when the coach may be critical of players or be generous with praise. Part of player development is the ability to accept constructive criticism along with praise for a job well done. This is a responsibility for both the player and the parent. The team coach will provide training and soccer instruction for 2-3 hours per team each week. During the later parts of the season, when teams are outdoors, instruction hours may go up due to tournament and league play.

**Financial Commitment**

The financial commitment is broken down into 3 components: club fees and team fees and volunteer fees.

**Club Fees**

Club fees are paid to ASA. First payment of $100 is due upon accepting a place on a team after tryouts in August. The balance of the fee and uniform cost is due approximately October 1st each year. Following are the major expenses covered by the Club fee: Club Coaching Directors, town field rental and maintenance costs, club administration, Village Glen lease and operating costs, porta johns, Buffalo League fees, referee fees, town indoor rental, equipment, nets, posts and other miscellaneous field equipment, State risk management/coach background check fees, player passes and insurance, and other operating costs. The Club fee also includes the administrative components, including accounting costs, the requirement to file tax returns as a non-profit organization, maintenance of the club website, and promotion of club events (such as tournaments and tryouts) via advertising media or the club newsletter. Player uniform is additional some years depending upon the 2-year cycle and if needed. Other years it will be included in the cost.

**Initial Payment**: An initial deposit of $100 is due once a player is offered and accepts a spot on a team. This payment is required to hold a player's spot on a team and is non-refundable.

**Remaining Payments**: The remaining payments are due on or before October 1st each year. Indoor play/practice commences November 1st. Payments are to be paid online via credit card or direct debit. Checks will be accepted but, are not recommended to avoid a non-payment situation.

**Payment Default**:

A player will be considered "in default" when payments are past due. Any player considered in default will be prohibited from participating in any club competitions, the player card will be held and club membership privileges may be suspended.

**Team Fees:**

Each team will have additional fees that will be collected on a schedule by the team treasurer. These fees will cover: tournaments (max of 3), indoor league fees, additional apparel purchases, the AIM Tournament volunteer fee, coaching stipend (if applicable) team social events, and any other agreed upon costs. See website for explanation of costs. No family is required to purchase more than the official travel uniform. All other apparel items are optional. Each team should setup a bank checking account for that season. Fees will vary by age group, by team and by competitive level of the team. The plans for the year and fees should be discussed by the coach with the parents at the first organizational meeting. Final decisions on league and placement and tournaments to participate in will be made by the coach but, availability and conflict issues should be considered with the families. Team fees will be due in December, February and April each playing season.

**Mandatory Fundraiser Fees:**

The AIM tournament is the only fundraiser that ASA conducts. We have no candy bars, gift cards, wrapping paper sales, etc. In conjunction with the tournament, we have a raffle with prizes drawn at the tournament. Each travel player will be assessed a $50 fee by their team treasurer, to be paid by January, and will be given 5 (each) $10 raffle tickets. Each family can choose to sell those tickets to others to recover their $50 or keep the tickets at their own discretion. The team treasurer will provide you the tickets and also pay for the entire team to obtain the tickets from the tournament director.

The additional money earned from the tournament helps to keep our costs low and add to needed field repairs or equipment purchases. ASA is a 501 © (3) Non-profit and works on as close to a break-even basis as possible.

**Financial Aid:**

Families facing financial difficulties in paying the Club fee may apply for financial aid at the time of registration. Requests must document fully the reasons why. To facilitate the process, parents may be asked to provide the first two pages of IRS Form 1040 personal tax return for both parents. The maximum aid will never exceed the full amount of Club Fee plus Uniform and will not be applicable to team fees. The committee will approve or deny the application within a reasonable amount of time after requested.

**Refund Policy:**

No refunds will be granted to players who drop out during the one year commitment or after October 1st each year. Special cases, such as season-ending injuries, other medical issues, family relocation will merit partial refunds depending upon when occurring. Player must miss at least 4 consecutive months of soccer to receive a medical refund and we may require documentation. Players who leave to go to another club after committing will not receive a release from ASA until all fees are paid in full to the team or an agreement is made regarding unpaid balances. An administrative fee to handle website and credit costs will be deducted from all refunds given.

I HAVE READ THIS CLUB/PLAYER/PARENT AGREEMENT AND I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE POLICIES OF ASA FOR THE CURRENT SOCCER SEASON.

Player Name-print Signature Date

Parent Name-print Signature Date

Team Manager or Coach Signature Date

Team Name and Age Group

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