

METHOD MMA CODE OF CONDUCT

Effective Date: Jan 1, 2026

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and professional training environment for all members. This Code of Conduct establishes clear expectations for behavior, physical contact, and interactions between coaches, staff, and athletes of all ages. All individuals associated with Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts—including coaches, staff members, athletes, parents, and visitors—are required to read, understand, and comply with these standards.

II. CORE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts operates on the following foundational principles:

- **Safety First:** The physical and emotional safety of all members, particularly minors, is our highest priority.
- **Respect:** All individuals will be treated with dignity, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, skill level, or background.
- **Professionalism:** Coaches and staff will maintain professional boundaries and conduct at all times.
- **Transparency:** All training activities will be conducted openly and in accordance with established policies.
- **Accountability:** Violations of this Code will be addressed promptly and appropriately.

III. APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT

A. General Guidelines Physical contact in martial arts training is inherent and necessary. Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts recognizes that appropriate physical contact is essential for:

- Demonstrating techniques
- Correcting form and positioning
- Drilling and sparring activities
- Ensuring safety during training to the best of our ability, knowing that martial arts can be an inherently dangerous hobby.

B. Appropriate Physical Contact Includes:

1. **Instructional Contact** • Demonstrating proper technique on students with verbal explanation.

C. Requirements for Appropriate Contact All physical contact must:

- Be directly relevant to the training activity
- Be conducted in plain view of others in public training areas
- Include verbal explanation before contact when possible
- Respect the comfort level and boundaries of all participants
- Be age-appropriate and skill-appropriate
- Cease immediately if a student expresses discomfort

IV. INAPPROPRIATE PHYSICAL CONTACT

A. Strictly Prohibited Contact The following types of physical contact are NEVER appropriate and are grounds for immediate disciplinary action:

1. **Intimate or Sexual Contact** • Any contact of sexual nature or with sexual intent • Contact with intimate areas (breasts, buttocks, groin) except when strictly necessary for technical instruction in supervised settings and with explicit verbal warning • Kissing, intimate hugging, or other romantic physical contact • Any contact that could reasonably be perceived as sexual or romantic
2. **Aggressive or Punitive Contact** • Striking a student in anger or as punishment • Excessive force beyond what is necessary for the drill or instruction • Contact intended to intimidate, humiliate, or cause unnecessary pain • Any form of hazing or physical punishment
3. **Inappropriate Situations** • Physical contact in isolated, private, or unsupervised areas • Contact during private one-on-one sessions with minors without parent/guardian present • Contact that continues after a student has expressed discomfort or

withdrawn consent • Contact while under the influence of drugs or alcohol B. Red Flag Behaviors The following behaviors are considered warning signs and will be investigated: • Seeking private time alone with minors • Showing favoritism to specific students through physical contact • Making sexually suggestive comments during physical contact • Excessive physical contact beyond what is necessary for instruction • Requesting that students keep physical contact or interactions secret • Discouraging parental observation or involvement.

V. PROTECTION OF MINORS A. Definition For purposes of this Code, a “minor” is any individual under the age of 18 years. B. Private Training Sessions Policy MANDATORY REQUIREMENT: Private, one-on-one training sessions between any adult (coach, staff member, or adult athlete) and a minor MUST include the presence of at least one of the following: • A parent or legal guardian of the minor • Another coach or staff member designated by Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts • The session must take place in a location with visual access from public areas (windows, open doors) This policy applies to:- Private lessons on Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts premises- Private lessons at any off-site location- Training sessions scheduled outside regular class hours Video analysis sessions or one-on-one instruction Exceptions: None. This is a zero-tolerance policy. C. Additional Minor Protection Measures 1. Locker Room and Changing Area Policy • Coaches and staff should avoid entering locker rooms when minors are present unless necessary for safety • If entry is necessary, announce presence loudly before entering • Maintain minimum necessary time in changing areas • Parents are encouraged to assist younger children with changing 2. Electronic Communication with Minors MANDATORY REQUIREMENT: All electronic communication between coaches/staff and minors must follow these protocols: • Parent/Guardian Inclusion: Parents or guardians must be included in ALL private messages, texts, emails, or direct messages with minors. This includes:- Text messages (parent must be copied or included in group message)- Email correspondence (parent must be CC'd)- Social media direct messages (parent must be included or communication must be avoided)- Any messaging platform (WhatsApp, Instagram, etc.) • Approved Communication Methods:- Group messages or announcements sent to entire class/team- Public posts on team or gym social media pages- Communications sent through official gym communication platforms where parents have access- Phone calls with parent/guardian present or on the line • Communication Content:- All communications must be training-related, professional, and transparent 3 – Avoid personal topics, sharing personal problems, or developing mentor relationships outside of training- Maintain professional language and tone at all times • Prohibited Communications:- Private one-on-one messages without parent/guardian inclusion- Requesting personal information unrelated to training- Requesting that minors keep communications secret from parents- Sharing personal phone numbers with minors (use gym number) Exceptions: None. Coaches who need to communicate urgent, time-sensitive information should contact the parent/guardian directly. 3. Transportation • Coaches and staff should not provide transportation to minors unless in emergency situations • If transportation is necessary, inform parents immediately and obtain verbal consent • Never transport a minor alone—always have another adult present or parent/guardian permission 4. Physical Contact with Minors • Extra caution must be exercised when physical contact is necessary • Always explain the instructional purpose before contact • Be especially mindful of age-appropriate instruction • Encourage parent/guardian observation

VI. COACH AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Professional Standards All Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts coaches and staff members must:

1. **Maintain Boundaries** • Keep relationships professional at all times • Avoid dual relationships (e.g., dating students) • Decline gifts of significant value from students or parents • Avoid being alone in isolated areas with students, especially minors
2. **Create a Safe Environment** • Intervene if witnessing inappropriate behavior • Report suspected violations of this Code immediately • Foster an atmosphere of mutual respect • Be approachable for students who wish to report concerns
3. **Model Appropriate Behavior** • Demonstrate techniques with professionalism • Use appropriate language at all times • Respect personal space and boundaries
4. **Address all members with respect regardless of skill level**
4. **Maintain Competency** • Stay current with safety protocols and first aid certification • Participate in ongoing professional development • Understand and follow all Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts policies • Scale instruction to the appropriate skill and age level

B. Prohibited Conduct for Coaches and Staff Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts coaches and staff shall NOT:

- Use training authority to gain personal advantage or favors • Train or instruct while impaired by alcohol or drugs • Share personal problems or intimate details inappropriately with students • Use abusive language, bullying, or verbal intimidation • Show preferential treatment based on personal relationships • Ignore or fail to report violations of this Code

VII. ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Expected Conduct All Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts athletes must:

1. **Respect Boundaries** • Respect the physical boundaries of training partners • Communicate discomfort immediately (verbally tap or say “stop”) • Accept instruction and feedback professionally • Avoid making physical contact unnecessarily outside of drills
2. **Training Etiquette** • Control intensity appropriate to partner’s skill level • Follow instructions from coaches and staff • Maintain personal hygiene and appropriate training attire • Tap early and tap often—ego has no place in safety
3. **Create Safe Environment** • Report inappropriate behavior to coaches or management immediately • Support fellow athletes who raise concerns • Refrain from gossip or behavior that creates hostile environment • Welcome new members and foster inclusivity

B. Prohibited Athlete Conduct Athletes shall NOT:

- Continue techniques after a partner has tapped or said “stop” • Use excessive force or intentionally injure training partners • Make sexually suggestive comments or advances toward others • Bully, harass, or intimidate other members
- 5. **Train while impaired by alcohol or drugs** • Record or photograph other members without consent

VIII. TRAUMA-INFORMED TRAINING AND BOUNDARIES Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts recognizes that students come from diverse backgrounds and may have experienced physical, emotional, or psychological trauma. We are committed to creating a training environment that respects personal boundaries and promotes healing rather than re-traumatization.

A. Understanding Trauma-Informed Training Trauma-informed training recognizes that:

- Past experiences may affect how students respond to physical contact, confined positions, or high-stress situations • Certain positions, drills, or scenarios may trigger anxiety, panic, or emotional distress • Building trust and providing choice are essential to creating a safe learning environment • Recovery and comfort take precedence over any single training session

B. Right to Opt Out — No Questions Asked ABSOLUTE RIGHT: All students have the unconditional right to opt out of any training activity that makes them uncomfortable,

including but not limited to: • Live sparring or rolling (grappling/ground work) • Any Contact drills • Partner work with specific individuals • High-intensity or competition-focused training • Physical demonstrations where they are used as the demonstration partner Implementation:- Students may opt out verbally (“I need to sit out”). Students may rejoin activities whenever they feel ready C. Empowering Students to Set Boundaries Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts actively teaches and reinforces boundary-setting: 1. Verbal Boundaries • Students are encouraged to communicate: “I’m not comfortable with this position,” “Can we work on something else?” or “I need a break” • Coaches will respect these statements immediately and without judgment 2. Physical Boundaries • Tapping signals immediate stop—no exceptions • Students can modify intensity by communicating before or during drills 6 • Personal space outside of active drilling must be respected 3. Choice in Partners • When possible, students may choose training partners • Students may decline to work with specific partners without providing reasons • Coaches will facilitate partner changes discreetly and without drawing attention D. Coach Responsibilities in Trauma-Informed Training Coaches and staff must: • Create predictability: Explain drills and activities before beginning, especially those involving physical contact or confined positions • Offer modifications: Provide alternative drills or reduced-intensity options • Avoid triggering language: Refrain from phrases like “Don’t be weak,” “Toughen up,” or anything that shames a student for setting boundaries • Check in regularly: Use phrases like “How’s your energy level?” • Normalize opting out: Publicly reinforce that sitting out is always acceptable and shows self-awareness • Maintain confidentiality: Do not discuss a student’s opt-out or boundaries with others without permission E. Red Flags for Trauma Responses Coaches should be aware of potential trauma responses and respond with compassion: • Sudden withdrawal, freezing, or dissociation during drills • Panic, rapid breathing, or visible distress • Uncharacteristic aggression or emotional outbursts • Avoidance of specific positions, people, or activities Response Protocol: 1. Stop the activity immediately 2. Give the student space and privacy 3. Offer water and a quiet area to recover 4. Do not press for explanations 5. If the student is a minor, inform parent/guardian privately 6. Suggest professional support resources if appropriate and if student/parent is receptive

IX. CONSENT AND COMMUNICATION A. Ongoing Consent • Consent to physical contact must be ongoing and can be withdrawn at any time • The word “STOP” or physical tap must result in immediate cessation of activity • Students have the absolute right to decline participation in any drill without penalty, explanation, or consequence • Coaches should regularly check in with students during physical instruction • “No” is a complete sentence and requires no justification 7 B. Affirmative Consent for Drills Before engaging in training activities involving significant physical contact, coaches should: • Explain the drill and the type of contact involved • Ask “Is everyone comfortable with this drill?” or “Does anyone need a modification?” • Watch for non-verbal cues of discomfort (hesitation, backing away, nervous body language) • Respect both verbal and non-verbal withdrawal of consent C. Open Communication Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts encourages: • Open dialogue between coaches, students, and parents • Questions about the purpose and nature of any physical contact • Feedback about comfort levels during training • Parent/guardian observation of all classes and training sessions • Regular communication about boundaries and needs

X. REPORTING VIOLATIONS A. Duty to Report All individuals associated with Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts have a duty to report suspected violations of this Code. We are

committed to providing multiple, accessible channels for reporting concerns so that everyone feels empowered to speak up. B. Clear Reporting Channels Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts provides the following reporting options: 1. Direct Report to Gym Owner/Management • Name: Eddie Abney • Phone: 410-575-3133 • Email: MethodBJJMMA@gmail.com • Name: Michelle Abney • Phone: 410-575-3133 • Email: MethodMMAbney@gmail.com In-Person: Available during business hours at front desk • Drop Box: Located at Front Desk Envelope • Best for: When you want to remain anonymous or fear retaliation 4. Trusted Coach/Staff Member • Anycoach or staff member can receive reports and will forward them to appropriate management • Staff will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible while ensuring safety • Best for: When you feel more comfortable talking to someone you know 5. Parent/Guardian Reporting • Parents may report concerns using any of the above channels • National Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-422-4453 • Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 • Best for: Suspected child abuse, criminal activity, or immediate danger C. What to Report Report any behavior that: • Violates the policies outlined in this Code • Makes you or others feel unsafe or uncomfortable • Appears inappropriate even if not explicitly listed in this Code • Involves suspected abuse or neglect of a minor • Includes private messaging with minors without parental inclusion • Violates the one-on-one training policy with minors • Involves boundary violations or failure to respect opt-outs • Creates a hostile, intimidating, or unsafe training environment You do NOT need proof to make a report. If something feels wrong, report it. D. How to Make a Report A good report includes (when known): 1. Who: Who was involved? (Names or descriptions) 2. What: What happened? (Be as specific as possible) 3. When: When did it occur? (Date and time) 4. Where: Where did it happen? (Location in gym or off-site) 5. Witnesses: Did anyone else see or experience this? 6. Evidence: Any texts, emails, photos, or other documentation 7. Impact: How has this affected you or others? You do not need to have all this information to make a report. Report what you know. E. What Happens After You Report 1. Acknowledgment: You will receive confirmation that your report was received (within 24 hours for non-anonymous reports) 2. Initial Assessment: Management will assess the severity and determine immediate safety measures if needed 3. Investigation: A thorough, impartial investigation will be conducted • Interviews with involved parties and witnesses • Review of any evidence or documentation • Timeline typically 7-14 days depending on complexity 4. Resolution: Appropriate action will be taken based on findings • Actions may range from warnings to permanent removal • You will be informed of the outcome to the extent appropriate 5. Follow-Up: Ongoing monitoring to ensure the issue is resolved and no retaliation occurs F. Confidentiality and Privacy • Records are maintained securely and in compliance with privacy laws. Any adverse action connected to the report Retaliation is itself a serious violation and will result in immediate disciplinary action, including potential termination of membership or employment.

XI. CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATIONS A. Disciplinary Actions Violations of this Code may result in the following actions, depending on severity: 1. Verbal warning with documented coaching 2. Written warning with conditions for continued participation 3. Temporary suspension from training or coaching duties 4. Permanent termination of membership or employment 5. Referral to law enforcement when criminal conduct is suspected B. Immediate Removal The following violations will result in immediate termination without warning: • Any form of sexual abuse or misconduct • Physical assault outside the scope of supervised training •

Violation of the minor protection policies with evidence of intent to harm • Criminal conduct on gym premises • Continued violations after prior disciplinary action

XII. MANDATORY ACKNOWLEDGMENT A. Requirement All coaches, staff, and athletes (and parents/guardians of minor athletes) must: 1. Read this Code of Conduct in its entirety 2. Sign an acknowledgment form confirming understanding and agreement to comply 3. Renew acknowledgment annually 4. Review updates or amendments when issued B. New Member Orientation All new members will receive:- A copy of this Code of Conduct- Orientation on key policies, especially minor protection and appropriate contact- Opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification- Contact information for reporting concerns

XIII. PARENTAL RIGHTS AND INVOLVEMENT Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts recognizes and supports the following parental rights: • Observe any class or training session in which their child participates 11 • Request explanations for any physical contact or instruction • Voice concerns about their child's training without fear of retaliation • Withdraw consent for their child's participation at any time • Meet with coaches and management to discuss their child's progress and safety. Parents are encouraged to:- Stay and observe training sessions when possible- Maintain open communication with coaches about their child's comfort and progress- Review this Code with their children- Report any concerns immediately

XIV. AMENDMENT AND REVIEW This Code of Conduct will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to reflect:- Changes in best practices for gym safety- Legal or regulatory requirements- Feedback from members, parents, and staff- Lessons learned from incident investigations All members will be notified of substantive changes and required to acknowledge the updated Code.

XV. ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT By training, coaching, or working at Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts, I acknowledge that: 1. I have received, read, and understand this Code of Conduct 2. I agree to comply with all policies and standards outlined herein 3. I understand that violations may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination 4. I understand my duty to report suspected violations 5. I will maintain the safety and integrity of Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts's training environment Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts is committed to the safety, development, and wellbeing of every member of our community. This Code of Conduct reflects our dedication to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and care. For questions, concerns, or to report violations, please contact: Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts Management, MethodBJJMMA@gmail.com, 410-515-3133, 95 Osborne Parkway, Forest Hill, MD 21050. This document should be posted publicly at Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts facilities and made available on the gym's website. **STAFF ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND SIGNATURE** PAGE 12 **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF CODE OF CONDUCT** I, _____ (print name), acknowledge that: 1. I have received a complete copy of the Method Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts Code of Conduct 2. I have read and understand all policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in this Code 3. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification 4. I agree to comply with all provisions of this Code of Conduct 5. I understand the consequences of violating these policies 6. I understand my duty to report suspected violations immediately 7. I

commit to maintaining the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of all members I specifically
acknowledge understanding of:- Protection of minors policies (no private training, no private
electronic communication)- Appropriate vs. inappropriate physical contact definitions-
Trauma-informed training and students' absolute right to opt out- Consent and communication
requirements- Mandatory reporting obligations- Professional conduct standards STAFF
MEMBER INFORMATION Full Name:

Position/Role:

Date of Hire/Start:

SIGNATURE

By signing below, I affirm that I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Method
Jiu-Jitsu & Mixed Martial Arts Code of Conduct. Staff MemberSignature:

Date:

Witness/Manager Signature: _____

Witness/Manager Name:

Title:

Date:

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY Date Form Received: _____

Reviewed by: _____ Filed: _____ 13

Original to be kept in staff personnel file. Copy provided to staff member for their records. 14