

# **CIRCUS JUVENTAS**

## **Safety Policies and Procedures**

### **2021 – 2022**

All students (and their parent(s)/guardian(s) if the student is under 18) must familiarize themselves with these Safety Policies and Procedures and must sign the Safety Policies and Procedures before the first day of class for the current session. By signing, students and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) attest to the fact that they have read these policies and procedures and that they agree to abide by them at all times. At the discretion of Circus Juventas, students who break these policies and procedures may face disciplinary action, which can range from a coach or staff verbal warning to a written behavior report and student/parent/staff conference or even to the extent of a suspension or expulsion from the program depending on the nature of the issue. If an infraction results in suspension, the student will not be allowed to take further classes at Circus Juventas (CJ) until a parent/staff/student conference has been attended and conditions rectifying the behavior have been agreed upon.

Families' cooperation in helping to make CJ a safe environment for the practice of circus arts is appreciated by the Board of Directors, coaches, staff, and fellow students.

The goal of our school is defined in our guiding principles and values as a youth non-profit organization that assists young people to develop circus arts and life skills in a supportive environment. The school's first responsibility is to the physical, mental, and emotional safety of the participants.

Because the activities are inherently hazardous, it is necessary that all students and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) understand and follow these policies and procedures. If a student or parent/guardian has an idea or concern to address which could enhance safety, please email your suggestion to our administrative team at [adminstaff@circusjuventas.org](mailto:adminstaff@circusjuventas.org). Any major concerns should be brought to the attention of the Directors (Dan and Betty Butler) as soon as possible.

### **Student responsibilities**

- 1.** The student is responsible for understanding all information specific to the student's class activities. When a student does not understand directions, it is their responsibility to ask the coach prior to participating in the activity.
- 2.** Annual Forms: All students must have a signed Circus Juventas' Consent and Release and Safety Policies and Procedures waiver form each academic year. These forms are available as part of the annual pre-registrations and must be signed by adult students (18+) or by the primary parent/guardian for students age 17 and under. Emergency contact and medical information (medical diagnoses, allergies, medications, etc.) must be updated if there is any change. All student emergency and medical information is accessible and editable on their Circus Juventas Family Account.
- 3.** Circus Juventas building safety instructions must *always* be followed by students and families. This includes, but is not limited to, the following rules as well as any verbal instructions given by coaches and/or staff members during classes.

### **IN THE ARENA & OTHER TRAINING SPACES**

- Never walk under a net.
- Never walk under a trapeze when someone is using it.
- Avoid walking across a crash mat; if there is a crash mat there, it is likely someone is hanging above it.
- Be aware of other activities and never interfere with another class or training session unless specifically instructed to by a coach.
- No food or drink in the training areas of the arena excepting non-glass water bottles which are permitted.
- No cell phones on the arena floor.
- Equipment use must always be supervised by the appropriate coach for that apparatus.
- Between classes students need to be in the locker room or lobby. If students are not in class, they should not be “hanging out” by equipment, by the winch, or in the vicinity of any class in which they are not participating.
- Any injury must be immediately reported to the student’s coach and/or front office. In general, a coach will fill out an Injury Report Form before the student can return to class.
- Like our policy for physical injury, any instance of aggressive or intentionally harmful behavior should also be reported immediately to CJ staff. In general, the CJ coach or staff member will fill out a Behavior Report Form to record the incident and begin the process of laying out next steps.

#### **THROUGHOUT THE BIG TOP**

- Families and guests (including children) are not allowed on the arena floor and must stay in the lobby and/or the designated secure viewing areas, as available. Only students registered for classes during that hour should be on the arena floor.
- Put trash, recycling, and compostable items in the appropriate bin(s). Failure to clean up one’s mess will result in mandatory cleanup duty.
- Clothes, gym bags, and/or personal articles should be in the locker rooms (in lockers if applicable) or in the cubbies supplied in the front lobby. We are not responsible for any lost or stolen items; valuables should be kept at home.
- Glass water bottles and other glass containers are strictly prohibited at Circus Juventas. Much of our training is barefoot, making broken glass particularly hazardous – no glass is to be brought into the big top.
- Structures in the common areas (for example, the supports in the lobby) are not circus equipment and should never be used as such.
- Smoking is prohibited inside facility or on the grounds.
- In accordance with federal laws applied to federal grant recipients, CJ is a drug-free environment.

**4.** Inherent in learning the circus arts is taking responsibility for one’s own safety and learning the safety aspects of the equipment, as well as being prepared both mentally and physically for one’s act. As a participant in Circus Juventas classes, camps, private lessons and/or other training, it is the responsibility of the student and student’s family to review and practice the principles outlined below before participating in any Circus Juventas activity.

**Practice common sense:** Due to the variety and unpredictability of hazardous situations that could arise, preparedness, awareness, and common sense are critical to safety. If a situation or equipment problem is observed, report it to a coach or staff member immediately.

**Be mentally prepared:** Students should not try a movement they do not feel prepared to try. Students should anticipate problems, ask questions, and be responsible for themselves. Students should also understand that some classes require a high-level of physical contact between students, and by enrolling in those acts are agreeing to participate at that level of contact. Students are always encouraged to self-advocate for their own comfort levels and personal boundaries throughout training. If a student is uncomfortable with the level of contact requested by a coach or act, the student is responsible for bringing this concern to their coach or CJ staff so we may make reasonable efforts to accommodate those needs. In some cases, it may be addressed by a simple alteration of routine, while in others it may mean the student should transfer to another act that fits within that student's personal comfort level. Students/families should thoroughly review the description of each act in the session guide to understand the training expectations. Any further questions may be directed to our front desk staff and we would be happy to help you.

**Be physically prepared:** Have adequate rest and nutrition. It is critical to warm up and stretch before class – students should arrive at least at least 10 minutes before normal class time and use this time to prepare for that class (change clothes, use the bathroom, fill up their water bottle, tie up hair, etc.). Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Be aware that illness may affect one's abilities, and students who are not feeling well should stay home. If a student does not feel physically ready to engage in a trick, they should discuss the situation with their coach before participating. In case of training after injury, students must provide a doctor's note stating that they may participate and to what extent before being allowed to return to training. However, Circus Juventas has the final decision on whether a student can safely participate, and to what extent, if any, regardless of doctor recommendation.

**Know the equipment:** Circus Juventas regularly inspects its equipment, and equipment knowledge is considered a basic part of a student's circus education. Students may be asked to help set up equipment and mats at the beginning of class. If something appears worn or broken or in any way unsafe, it should immediately be reported to a coach and not used until a coach has confirmed it is safe for use. Remember to always use passive safety equipment (such as mats, crash pads, or a net) as specified for your activity.

**Be supportive of other students, staff and CJ community members:** Circus Juventas is an inclusive community and, as such, will not tolerate any type of bullying in classes, on the premises, or via social media. The mental and emotional health of our students, coaches, staff and community at large is an integral part of creating a safe and supportive circus community. Any such behavior that is deemed to be detrimental to any student, coach, volunteer, parent, or staff member will result in discipline up to and including dismissal. Continued concerns will initiate a parent/staff/student conference. CJ has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying for the safety of all participants.

### **Additional safety considerations and student/family responsibilities:**

**Medications:** Many prescription and non-prescription drugs, including herbal remedies, can affect judgement and coordination. It is the student's responsibility to know all possible side effects. For safety reasons, if in doubt, a doctor or pharmacist should be consulted. Pain killers, such as Advil and Tylenol, are available at the front desk *only* for adult use – students under 18 are not permitted access unless specially permitted by the parent/guardian on file at the time of the request.

**Drugs:** Students may not come to or participate in any activities at CJ under the influence of any drug (including marijuana). A drug is defined as: (i) illegal controlled substances as defined by Minnesota law; (ii) legal controlled substances that are being used or possessed illegally; or (iii) legal controlled substances that could adversely affect the ability of the student to participate at CJ safely. Students are prohibited from possessing, storing, transferring, or using drugs, or attending classes or performances under their influence. The only limited exception to the prohibition against drugs is prescription drugs used in accordance with a valid prescription, and so long as one can participate safely without unsafe side effects (see above). Suspected or known use of drugs will result in suspension of all CJ activities and initiate a parent/staff/student conference, which may result in immediate dismissal. CJ has a zero-tolerance policy for drug use for the safety of all students, coaches, and staff.

**Alcohol:** Consumption of alcohol on Circus Juventas premises (including parking lots, surrounding streets, and off-site event locations) is prohibited, except for refreshments being served by designated personnel during events to adults (not participating in any show) over the age of 21. Students may not come to CJ under the influence of alcohol. Use of alcohol by a participant before or at class may be cause for immediate dismissal. Suspected use of alcohol will result in suspension of any CJ activities and initiate a parent/staff/student conference. CJ has a zero-tolerance policy for underage drinking and/or for drinking on site, for the safety of all students, coaches, and staff.

**Smoking:** Circus Juventas is a smoke-free facility. Smoking and tobacco use in any form (including lighting, smoking, or carrying a lighted cigarette, cigar, or pipe; any electronic smoking device; and chewing tobacco) is prohibited inside the building, is not allowed in the vicinity of the front entrance at all, and is not allowed within 25' of the side or back doors. CJ has a zero-tolerance policy for underage smoking.

**Guns:** Although Minnesota is a concealed carry state, guns, firearms, or other weapons are expressly prohibited on the premises. CJ has a zero-tolerance policy for weapons (props excluded). In the case of props, they must be used for their intended purpose only and shall never be used in a joking or other manner not associated with the performance for which they are used.

**Theft:** CJ is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. However, Circus Juventas has a zero-tolerance policy for theft. This includes removal of another student's equipment, costume, footwear, or any other personal possessions from the locker rooms, cubbies, or any part of the building, hiding another's items, or otherwise moving anyone's personal items without their permission. It also includes theft from and between anyone in the viewing area, the lobby, and other public spaces.

## **Zero Tolerance Policy**

When we say "zero tolerance," we mean it. Any student or parent/guardian who commits any act that is contrary to this Family Handbook and the Safety Policies and Procedures, or who violates a rule of common sense or decency, may face discipline (e.g. removal, dismissal, suspension) and/or a parent/staff/student conference. It is in the sole discretion of CJ to determine if an incident fits within our zero-tolerance guidelines. In addition, a progressive form of discipline may not be followed in all cases. Depending on the nature of the violation and the surrounding circumstances, including, but not limited to, the nature of the conduct or the student's record and past conduct, one or more steps of the discipline process may be repeated or skipped. In some circumstances, and in CJ's sole discretion, immediate discharge may result from a single incident. In cases of suspension or dismissal, there will be no refunds or made-up classes.

## **Active and Passive Safety Equipment**

Our students' safety is our number one concern and priority. If at any time a student has any hesitation as to the safety of any equipment, that student should not use the equipment until they are personally satisfied as to the safety of the equipment and have discussed their concern with a coach. We are always happy to explain any safety equipment to students or parent(s)/guardian(s) in detail and encourage students to ask for clarification and further instruction so they are comfortable before participating in the activity. Students should not use any equipment that they feel is unsafe.

**Passive safety equipment:** This consists of runners, mats, crash pads, and nets, which must always be used. Passive equipment may decrease the severity of accidents but may not prevent injury. They are to be in place in case active spotting fails or is not being used. Proper set-up position and thickness must be used. Everyone is responsible for ensuring equipment is not modified or used in a way that compromises its effectiveness. If something is out of place, please notify a coach or staff member immediately.

**Safety belts:** The belt must fit snugly, unable to slide down over the pelvis or up to the chest. It is the student's responsibility to make sure they know how to properly use their safety belt and that their belt is checked by their coach. Safety belts should only be put on in the presence of a coach. Only approved safety belts may be used.

**Carabiners:** Several types of locking carabiners are used to secure safety lines. Students should make sure that they understand how to lock the carabiners they are using – if they do not, they should not be using that apparatus until a coach gives them proper instruction. Always double check the gate to make sure it is securely locked. If a carabineer seems to be stuck or difficult to move, notify the coach before using it. Coaches are always expected to check the equipment before a student uses it.

**Active spotting:** We have two forms of active spotting at Circus Juventas. The first form of spotting used for all activities at Circus Juventas is hand spotting. Hand spotting is when a CJ instructor uses direct physical contact to support and ensure the safety of the student through hands-on contact. All Circus Juventas participants and family members must recognize that by enrolling in these activities they agree to the use of hands-on spotting as determined by CJ instructors for safety. Secondly, we use a variety of active spotting systems such as belts, carabiners, pulleys, and spotting lines. Use of these systems will vary, depending on skill levels and act requirements. When safety lines are required, a CJ instructor must hold them.

**Shoes:** Students must wear proper footwear at all times. Proper footwear can range from barefoot to specialized sneakers – please check with the act instructor as to what is appropriate.

## **Injuries and Emergencies**

In an emergency, 911 should be called immediately. There is a phone at the front desk that can be used. Although some CJ instructors are trained and have updated certification in emergency first aid, concussion, and CPR, the school does not maintain emergency medical equipment and does not have emergency response personnel. It is important that student emergency contact and medical information (medical diagnoses, allergies, medications, etc.) is always up to date in case of emergency.

Any injury that results in a participant leaving class or receiving treatment by a physician must be reported to the office as soon as possible. The coach will then fill out an injury report form before the student may return to class.

TRIA Orthopedics staff are frequently present on a volunteer basis and may be helpful in assessing a situation. They are not, however, a substitute for emergency personnel. The presence of TRIA staff, while a great resource for CJ, does not constitute CJ's endorsement of their services over others.

### **Insurance Coverage**

Like any youth sports organization, CJ maintains general liability insurance, which is commonly referred to as "spectator insurance." In the event of an accident, this coverage may extend to some planned off-site events. This insurance is not intended to substitute for a participant's own major medical insurance, which each student must have or sign a waiver form for before being allowed to enroll in a course. Before participating in this or any activity, the participant should carefully consider their need for and adequacy of hospitalization insurance covering medical expenses, rehabilitation, long term care, and loss of income.

Again, it is the student's or parent's responsibility to always keep the emergency contact and health information up to date in the registration system.

### **Emergency Action Plans**

Circus Juventas has developed emergency plans with both evacuation and shelter-in-place options in response to a variety of emergency scenarios. At our discretion, we may periodically conduct drills of these plans. The complete [Circus Juventas Emergency Action Plan](#) guidebook is located at the front desk.

### **Inspections**

CJ conducts rigorous annual outside inspection of our equipment, seating systems, fire and safety systems, sprinklers, and alarms. If something is out of place, please notify a member of staff immediately.

## **Community**

The Circus Juventas community has an important role to play in everything we strive to create and sustain at the big top. As a non-profit youth organization, we depend heavily on the support of our community to create that supportive, close-knit, family-circus atmosphere that is at the heart of what we do. Families and community members play valuable roles at CJ as parents, volunteers, audience members, financial supporters, advocates/promoters, and so much more! The code of conduct outlined below serves as a guideline for what kind of behavioral conduct we expect from our community. We are so grateful to our students, families, and community members for all their support in keeping CJ a safe and supportive environment for all!

## **Code of Conduct**

**Behavior – Students:** Good sportsmanship, polite manners, an inclusive and supportive attitude, and a good disposition are expected at all classes, workshops, private lessons, rehearsals, and events. At Circus Juventas we strive to create a culture of mutual respect and expect all members of our community to treat each other with the respect they would expect in return.

Circus Juventas does not tolerate gossip of fellow students, coaches, or members of staff, which is considered disruptive to the learning process. Violent or aggressive behavior, malicious or discriminatory comments, and harassment of any kind is strictly prohibited. This kind of behavior at CJ is considered bullying, for which we have a zero-tolerance policy.

Negative behavior and comments, on-site or off-site via methods such as social media, quickly destroys the sense of family and community we strive to build. While a remark may seem inconsequential, there is no way to determine how hurtful it can be to others or how it can snowball.

If a behavior issue arises between students or becomes apparent during regular classes/camps, the responsible instructor will submit a behavior report to staff to initiate the proper follow-up with parents. Although each situation is unique and will be handled individually as needed, we typically have a 3-step behavior process following a behavior incident with a student:

- 1)** CJ will notify the parents of the behavior issue by phone or email as a first warning with instructions to take whatever personal steps are necessary in order to resolve the issue/stop further negative behavior.
- 2)** If the behavior continues, or if the initial incident was particularly concerning or severe, a parent/staff/student conference will be held to discuss appropriate next steps.
- 3)** If the behavior continues to be a problem after the conference, the student(s) will be removed from the class or camp in which they are having behavioral issues.

In some cases, it may be necessary for the student to be dismissed from the Circus Juventas program as a whole. Any temporary or permanent student suspensions are determined at the sole discretion of the Circus Juventas Directors – see “Zero-Tolerance Policy.”

### **Behavior – Parents/Guardians and Family Members:**

Circus Juventas does not tolerate gossip of students, coaches, or members of staff in our community. As with our students, negative parent behavior and comments regarding Circus Juventas, whether on-site or off-site via methods such as social media, quickly destroys the sense of family and community we strive to build. While a remark may seem inconsequential, there is no way to determine how hurtful it can be to others or how it can snowball. Remember, a strong and supportive community is the first step in creating a safe place for our students to learn and grow. Help us foster the supportive circus community our students deserve by bringing a positive and well-meaning attitude to all your interactions at Circus Juventas.

Violent or aggressive behavior, malicious or discriminatory comments, and harassment of any kind towards CJ students, staff, volunteers, coaches, or other parents/community members is strictly prohibited. This kind of behavior at CJ is considered bullying, for which for which we have a zero-tolerance policy. Patterns of aggressive or hostile parent communication with CJ staff, coaches, and volunteers may be grounds for the student(s)' dismissal from the program.

We ask parents and guardians to please remember that discussions with coaches must be held at the appropriate time and place - when coaches are instructing a class they are expressly prohibited from individual parent conferences for the safety of the class. Please do not yell or call out to coaches while they are instructing. Communication intended for coaches should be sent to the school administrator ([adminstaff@circusjuventas.org](mailto:adminstaff@circusjuventas.org)) so they can pass along accordingly. For safety reasons, please also refrain from any communication with students while they rehearse or perform.

If a problem arises between parents, it is expected that it will be resolved amicably and settled outside of Circus Juventas. Disputes of this nature cannot be allowed to harm the learning environment nurtured by the CJ staff and its coaches. If a situation cannot be resolved amicably, one or both parties may be asked to leave the CJ program.

**Behavior – Coaches:** Circus Juventas prides itself on employing esteemed coaches from all over the world; we believe this makes our program better rounded and provides our students with an international perspective on the circus arts. All our coaches are fully trained, and many are considered worldwide leaders in their field.

Our coaches each have unique and individual coaching styles and techniques reflective of their training background. All training and routine decisions are left to the discretion of the coaches, though based on a CJ-developed curriculum. If a parent has questions or concerns, they may feel free request a conference with a coach or a staff member to discuss. To request a conference, simply email [adminstaff@circusjuventas.org](mailto:adminstaff@circusjuventas.org).

The coaches reserve the right to stop training at any time for any reason during class. Additionally, our coaches may dismiss a student from class if their behavior is physically or emotionally harmful to their classmates and/or other coaches. Please understand that a coach would not make these decisions unless they had deemed it necessary, and we support our coaches in these decisions. It is CJ policy that a coach is never to be alone with a student.

### **Sexual Behavior**

All forms of inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature will not be tolerated on Circus Juventas property or at any location where CJ performances, trips, or activities are taking place. Any incidences reported to Circus Juventas will be taken very seriously and may instigate a parent/staff/student conference. Please remember that CJ students may be as young as two years old, and older students serve as role models for younger students. As such, public displays of affection are not tolerated on the premises.