Healthy Lifestyle Policy for Players and Team Personnel

1. Purpose

Royal York Football Club (RYFC) is committed to fostering a healthy, safe, and supportive environment for all players, coaches, and team personnel.
This policy promotes balanced physical, mental, and emotional well-being, recognizing that healthy lifestyle habits directly impact performance, team spirit, and long-term development in sport and life.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all RYFC players (grassroots, academy, and rep levels), coaches, technical staff, volunteers, and team officials.
The principles outlined herein are designed to encourage responsible habits, positive role modeling, and lifelong commitment to wellness.

3. Policy Statement

RYFC promotes the development of the "whole athlete" — nurturing not only soccer skills, but also physical health, mental resilience, nutrition awareness, and social well-being.
All members of the Club community are expected to demonstrate behaviours that reflect a commitment to a healthy and balanced lifestyle, both on and off the field.

4. Principles of a Healthy Lifestyle

a. Nutrition and Hydration

- Players and team personnel are expected to maintain a balanced and nutritious diet that supports performance and recovery.
- Energy drinks, excessive caffeine, and high-sugar snacks should be avoided before and during training or matches.

- Proper hydration is essential; players should arrive at all sessions with a filled water bottle and drink fluids regularly throughout activity.
- The Club encourages parents and players to plan meals that include fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats.

b. Sleep and Recovery

- Adequate rest is essential for physical recovery and mental alertness.
- Players should aim for **8–10 hours of sleep per night**, particularly before training and matches.
- Screen time and social media use should be limited in the hours before bedtime to promote quality sleep.
- Rest days should be respected as part of the training cycle to prevent burnout and injury.

c. Physical Fitness and Injury Prevention

- All players must attend scheduled training sessions and arrive prepared to participate fully in warm-up and cool-down routines.
- Stretching, mobility, and injury-prevention exercises (as directed by RYFC coaching staff) are mandatory parts of training.
- Injuries must be reported immediately to the coach or team manager; medical advice must be followed.
- Returning to play before full recovery is discouraged — medical clearance may be required for significant injuries.

d. Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being

- RYFC recognizes the importance of mental health as equal to physical health.
- Players and staff are encouraged to speak openly about stress, pressure, or emotional challenges with coaches or the Club's wellness liaison.
- Bullying, hazing, or any form of emotional harm will not be tolerated.
- Team environments should foster inclusion, encouragement, and peer support.
- The Club will provide information about available community resources and professional support when needed.

e. Substance Use and Personal Conduct

- The use of tobacco, alcohol, recreational drugs, or performance-enhancing substances is strictly prohibited for all players and staff while representing RYFC.
- Coaches and team personnel are expected to model healthy behaviour by refraining from smoking or consuming alcohol in the presence of players or during any Club-related activity.
- Any breach of this policy will be investigated under the Club's **Zero Tolerance Policy** and may result in disciplinary action or suspension.

f. Social Media and Screen Time

- Players are encouraged to use social media responsibly and avoid content that promotes unhealthy habits or negative behaviour.
- Excessive screen time can interfere with sleep, focus, and social engagement; moderation is expected.
- Coaches and team personnel should model healthy boundaries and balance in their digital engagement.

5. Role Modeling and Education

- Coaches, staff, and senior players serve as role models and are expected to demonstrate healthy behaviours in all aspects of Club involvement.
- RYFC will provide periodic educational sessions on topics such as nutrition, mental wellness, sleep, and recovery strategies.
- The Club encourages families to support these principles at home and help players make healthy daily choices.

6. Responsibilities

Group	Responsibilities
Players	Maintain healthy habits, follow club guidelines, and communicate any health or wellness concerns promptly.
Coaches / Team Personnel	Promote and model healthy lifestyle choices; support players' physical and mental well-being; report any concerns to the Technical Director or Club Director.
Parents / Guardians	Reinforce healthy behaviours at home, including balanced meals, proper rest, and supportive routines.
Club Management	Provide resources, training, and a safe environment that prioritizes health and wellness across all programs.

7. Monitoring and Enforcement

- Compliance with this policy is monitored informally throughout the season by coaching and management staff.
- Concerns about repeated unhealthy behaviours (e.g., neglecting nutrition, sleep deprivation, or substance use) will be addressed through discussion, education, and — if necessary — disciplinary measures.
- Violations of the **Zero Tolerance Policy** or **Code of Conduct** related to this policy may result in suspension or dismissal.

8. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the **Technical Director**, **Club Director**, and **Operations Team** to ensure its continued relevance and alignment with best practices in youth sport development and wellness promotion.