



SMHA HARASSMENT & BULLYING POLICY

AUGUST 2014

SMHA HARASSMENT & BULLYING POLICY

1. **RECOGNITION AND PREVENTION OF ABUSE POLICY**

As per the Hockey Canada policy regarding Abuse and Harassment, the Stratford Minor Hockey Association (SMHA) policy sets out the principles and practices of Hockey Canada with regard to abusive behaviour towards participants.

2. **HARASSMENT / BULLYING POLICY**

Some behaviours which are defined as abuse, when a child or youth's protection is at risk, can also constitute harassment or bullying, when the behaviour breaches human rights or appropriate relationship/conduct boundaries.

3. **PURPOSE**

Protecting participants from all forms of abuse and neglect, whether emotional, physical or sexual, is an important element of safety. Hockey Canada considers any form of abuse or neglect to be unacceptable and will do all it can to prevent this intolerable social problem. To this end, Hockey Canada will promote awareness of all forms of abuse and neglect by providing educational materials and programs for participants, parents, volunteers and staff members. Through the use of these strategies, we will send a clear message to all potential abusers and sexual predators that hockey participants are not easy targets. Hockey Canada is committed to the highest possible standards of care for its participants.

4. **RECOGNITION AND PREVENTION OF ABUSE POLICY**

Some behaviours which are defined as harassment or bullying, when the behaviour breaches human rights or appropriate relationship/conduct boundaries, can also constitute abuse, when a child or youth's protection is at risk. Hockey Canada's Recognition and Prevention of Abuse Policy covers such behaviours. Together, the two policies address the entire spectrum of abusive, bullying and harassing behaviours.

Harassment is a form of discrimination which is prohibited by human rights legislation in Canada. Bullying involves a person expressing their power through the humiliation of another person. Bullying may be a form of harassment but also has some of its own defining characteristics. The sport setting is one setting in which bullying occurs. In some cases coaches and players use bullying tactics deliberately to motivate performance and to weaken opponents. Hockey Canada supports the right of all its members, whether athletes, volunteers or employees, to participate in all Hockey Canada activities free from any form of harassment and bullying. Further, Hockey Canada emphasizes the importance of eliminating harassment and bullying in hockey as a key element in ensuring the safety of young participants. A sports environment which actively

discourages harassment and bullying and builds relationships based on trust and mutual respect, is an environment which discourages the abuse of children and youth, and encourages the overall development of the individual.

In order to further these objectives, Hockey Canada will make every reasonable effort to promote awareness of the problem of harassment and bullying among all its members, and to respond quickly and effectively to complaints or disclosures of harassment or bullying.

5. ZERO TOLERANCE TO PROMOTE FAIR PLAY

Over the past several years it has become increasingly apparent that participating in the game of hockey, whether as a player, coach, official or spectator, has become less and less enjoyable. People are leaving the game hockey for the wrong reasons and with bad memories. Conduct of spectators, coaches, officials and players amongst themselves is increasingly more unacceptable, both on and off the ice.

SMHA views the "Zero Tolerance" as support and confirmation to the many excellent volunteers, coaches, officials, players and parents who are in the majority and who have always practiced and subscribed to the fundamental principles of fun, respect and positive development of the game of hockey. "Zero Tolerance" is the vehicle to assist them to further these values and make the game of hockey even better and more enjoyable.

6. OBJECTIVES

To provide a program which plays a significant role in the development of a young person's values, morals, social maturity, physical fitness and mental fitness. To promote acceptable conduct which provides:

- Respect for persons
- Protection from harm
- Development of ethical conduct towards others
- Notions of justice, fairness, equity
- Caring attitudes
- Freedom to enjoy, to flourish
- Respect for the game

It is a must that every participant abides by these principles. A participant is defined as (but not limited to) a player, coach, official, or spectator.

This program is not intended to be a new process for complaints about officiating or general hockey rules. The objective is to promote and ensure acceptable behaviour.

7. DEFINITION OF "UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR"

An individual is displaying unacceptable behaviour if they are verbally or physically harassing and/or abusing a game participant (player, coach, parent, spectator or official).

When there is a situation of "unacceptable behaviour", the responsibilities of SMHA coaches, spectators and on-ice officials are as set out herein. The focus is on achieving the program objectives. Confrontation should be avoided and reporting is encouraged, as it is an important step in attaining the objective.

Members shall avoid behaviour that brings SMHA or the sport of Hockey into disrepute, including but not limited to abusive use of alcohol and non-medicinal use of drugs, or that endangers the safety of others.

The aforementioned "unacceptable behaviour" also includes use of social media, and any electronic communication aimed an individual, family member, coaching staff, player, parent or spectator.

All of this policy will encompass all members of SMHA from board members to parents and spectators.

8. DEFINITION OF "BULLYING"

Bullying involves a person expressing their power through the humiliation of another person. Bullying occurs between people at any age and is not addressed under human rights legislation. It is inappropriate behaviours that are typically cruel, demeaning and hostile toward the bullying targets. (Most commonly occurs between children under the age of twelve but may also constitute behaviours between youth or between adults. Bullying is similar to harassment but the behaviours are not addressed under human rights laws. Bullies are typically cruel, demeaning and hostile towards the targets of their bullying.) The actual issue of bullying is not addressed by the law, except when the behaviour does become a criminal issue – e.g. extortion, physical assault etc.. Bullying can be broken down into four types; physical (hit or kick victims; take/damage personal property), verbal (name calling; insults; constant teasing), relational (try to cut off victims from social connection by convincing peers to exclude or reject a certain person), and cyber bullying. The following is a non-exhaustive list of tactics used by bullies to control their targets:

- a. unwarranted yelling and screaming directed at the target
- b. continually criticizing the target's abilities
- c. blaming the target of the bullying for mistakes
- d. making unreasonable demands related to performance
- e. repeated insults or put downs of the target
- f. repeated threats to remove or restrict opportunities or privileges

- g. denying or discounting the targets accomplishments
- h. threats of and actual physical violence

9. COMPLAINT HANDLING PROCEDURE

a. Implementation Trigger

The reporting of unacceptable behaviour by a director, spectator, coach, player or official is the triggering event of the complaints handling procedure. This reporting process will govern the person(s) responsible for investigating the complaint. The methods of enforcement will vary dependent on the severity of the event.

b. Reporting Process

If an incident occurs which meets the definition of unacceptable behaviour and in the opinion of a player, parent, spectator, coach, official or administrator, is serious enough to warrant a formal complaint, then a Complaint Intake Form must be completed.

The Complaint Intake Form should be submitted to the Stratford Minor Hockey Association, Attention Risk Management Committee Chair, P.O. Box 21157, Stratford, Ontario N5A 7V4 for review and actions.

A report will be generated and the content of the report will be sent to the Alliance Hockey office. The Alliance will be kept up to date during the investigation process.

c. Responsible Reporters - On/Off Ice Officials

If, in the opinion of an official (on-ice or off-ice), an individual is verbally or physically harassing or abusing a game participant (coach, player or official), the official, will at a stoppage of play, identify the offending individual and through discussion with one or both coaches, request that the offending individual(s) cease this unacceptable behaviour. If the behaviour continues, the official will document the offense or action on a game Incident Report Form or the back of the game sheet. A copy of the write up on the game sheet will be forwarded to the Chair Person of the Risk Management Committee. This will trigger the complaint handling procedure and the incident will be investigated by the Risk Management Committee.

10. ENFORCEMENT

At the conclusion of an investigation, the SMHA Risk Management Chair Person or designate shall have the power to suspend summarily any player, parent, coach, trainer, manager, official or spectator of any team under the auspices of the Association for any conduct on or off the ice which in the sole discretion of the Risk Management Committee is deemed to be unbecoming or detrimental to the game. In the event of an incident that involves an outside team, the President of the Stratford Minor Hockey Association will

cause a letter to be sent to the offending teams, person(s) home association for their review.

Also if the unacceptable behaviour involves a member of the SMHA executive or board member that board member shall be suspended until the investigation has been completed. The suspension will follow if the member doesn't step down on his/her own accord in order for the investigation to be completed without bias or prejudice. In the event the investigation finds the member guilty of a serious misconduct, the member may be asked to relinquish his/her position on the board. If the member does not and the misconduct is of a serious nature then a vote will take place as per the SMHA constitution by the members of the board to determine if the member will remain as an active member.

The SMHA Risk Management Committee shall have the power to prevent summarily any spectator from viewing any game or other activity or entering a facility to view such game or activity under the auspices of the Association for any conduct which in the sole discretion of the Risk Management Committee is deemed to be unbecoming or detrimental to the game. A letter will be sent to the City of Stratford requesting a trespass notice be sent to the sanctioned party.

Further, the Risk Management shall have the power to suspend summarily the player, parent, coach, team official or the team to which the spectator is attached.

This authority may be delegated to such association directors and officials as the President and the Risk Management Chair Person may designate.

The power and designation granted to the Risk Management Committee allows for effective and quick action against conduct unbecoming or detrimental to the game of hockey and its participants, as well as action against the team of the contravening spectator. The association is prepared to enforce these provisions as required and are an integral part of the reporting and enforcement initiatives. Breaches of this policy are not limited to venues where SMHA members represent the association. Harassment and bullying can occur anywhere. In the event of any form of communication that is deemed to be harassment or bullying in nature and is intended to alarm or hurt a member of SMHA via text, email, or letter will also be investigated by the Risk Management Committee.

11. APPEAL PROCESS

Upon receiving a request for an appeal, SMHA will establish a Special Committee comprised of three (3) members to hear any appeals related to the discipline or actions undertaken as a result of the outcome of an investigation. Appeals should be heard as

soon as is practical (within 7 days). The appeal must contain a clear and concise summary of the grounds for the appeal. Notice of the appeal must be submitted to the President of the Stratford Minor Hockey Association within five (5) days from the date of notification of discipline.

12. IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The Risk Management Committee shall have the power to suspend summarily any player, parent, coach, trainer, manager or official of any team under the auspices of a member of the Association for any conduct on or off the ice which in the sole discretion of the President is deemed to be unbecoming or detrimental to the game. Such suspension to be effective until dealt with by the Special Committee within a reasonable (or appropriate) time.

The Risk Management Committee shall have the power to prevent summarily any spectator from viewing any game or other activity or entering a facility to view such game or activity under the auspices of the association for any conduct which in the sole discretion of the Risk Management Committee is deemed to be unbecoming or detrimental to the game. Further, the Risk Management Committee shall have the power to suspend summarily the player, parent, coach, team official, official or the team to which the spectator is affiliated. Such action to be effective until dealt with by the Special Committee within a reasonable (or appropriate) time.

At the start of the season, a meeting is to be held with all team management and representatives of the officials to present the program. At this presentation, SMHA will:

- Detail the objectives
- Outline the expectations
- Lay out the consequences
- Explain the team's responsibilities
- Explain the Association's responsibilities
- Explain the distribution & collection method that will be used

Parents, coaches and team officials will be asked to review and sign agreements stating they will abide by the policies and principles contained in this policy

13. BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES FOR COACHES

- Winning is a consideration, but neither the only one nor the most important one. Care more about the child than winning the game. Remember players are involved in hockey for fun and enjoyment.
- Be a positive role model to your players, display emotional maturity and be alert to the physical safety of players. Do not appear for games or practices while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs. Show respect for on-ice and off-ice officials at all times.

- Be generous with your praise when it is deserved; be consistent, honest; be fair and just; do not criticize players publicly; learn to be a more effective communicator and coach; don't yell at players.
- Adjust to personal needs and problems of players, be a good listener, never verbally or physically abuse a player or official; give all players the opportunity to improve their skills, gain confidence and develop self-esteem; teach them the basics.
- Organize practices that are both fun and challenging for your players. Familiarize yourself with the rules, techniques and strategies of hockey; encourage all your players to be team players.
- Maintain an open line of communication with your players' parents. Explain the goals and objectives of your association. Be concerned with the overall development of your players. Stress good health habits and clean living.
- To play the game is great; to love the game is greater.

14. BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

- Do not force your children to participate in sports, but support their desires to play their chosen sport. Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment — make it FUN!
- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Remember that children learn best by example, so applaud the good plays of both teams. Do not embarrass your child by yelling at players, coaches, or officials. By showing a positive attitude toward the game and all of its participants, your child will benefit.
- Should you wish to confront your child's coach about a practice or game related issue, wait 24 hours before doing so. Emotions can cause miscommunication and misunderstandings.
- Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit your young athlete.
- Know and study the rules of the game, and support the officials on and off the ice. This approach will help in the development and support of the game. Any criticism of the officials only hurts the game.
- Applaud a good effort in victory and in defeat and enforce the positive points of the game. Never yell or physically abuse your child after a game or practice — it is destructive. Work toward removing the physical and verbal abuse in youth sports.
- Recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are important to the development of your child and the sport.
- If you enjoy the game, learn all you can about the game — and volunteer!

15. BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES FOR PLAYERS

- Play for FUN.
- Work hard to improve your skills
- Be a team player – get along with your teammates
- Learn teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline.

- Learn the rules and play by them. Always be a good sport.
- Respect your coach, your teammates, your parents, opponents and officials. Discuss an official's decision calmly and express your opinion clearly and without profanity or disrespect. Don't be afraid to make mistakes; that's part of the learning process.
- Be modest in victory and gracious in defeat. Give 100% effort at each practice and game.

16. BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES FOR SPECTATORS

- Display good sportsmanship. Always respect players, coaches, and officials. Act appropriately; do not taunt or disturb other fans; enjoy the game together. Cheer good plays of all participants; avoid booing opponents. Cheer in a positive manner and encourage fair play.
- Profanity and objectionable cheers or gestures are offensive and will not be tolerated.
- Help provide a safe and fun environment; throwing any items on the ice surface can cause injury to players and officials.
- Do not lean over the boards or pound on the glass; the glass surrounding the ice surface is part of the playing area.
- Support the referees and coaches by trusting their judgment and integrity. Be responsible for your own safety — be alert to prevent accidents from flying pucks and other avoidable situations.
- Respect locker rooms as private areas for players, coaches, and officials. Never appear for a game while intoxicated by drugs or alcohol.
- Be supportive after the game...win or lose. Recognize good effort, teamwork and sportsmanship.

17. BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES FOR ON AND OFF-ICE OFFICIALS (REFEREES AND TIME KEEPERS)

- Act in a professional and businesslike manner at all times and take your role seriously.
- Strive to provide a safe and sportsmanlike environment in which players display their hockey skills.
- Know all playing rules, their interpretations and their proper application. Remember that officials are "teachers".
- Set a good example. Make your calls with quiet confidence; never with arrogance.
- Control games only to the extent that it is necessary to provide a positive and safe experience for all participants.
- Violence must never be tolerated
- Be fair and impartial at all times. Answer all reasonable questions and requests.
- Adopt a "zero tolerance" attitude toward verbal or physical abuse.
- Never use foul language when speaking with a player, coach or parent.

- Use honesty and integrity when answering questions.
- Admit your mistakes when you make them.
- Never openly criticize a coach, player or other official.
- Keep your emotions under control.

18. BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES FOR BOARD MEMBERS

- Follow the rules and regulations of the Canadian Hockey Federation, and the Ontario Minor Hockey to ensure the philosophy and objectives of these organizations are promoted.
- Work with on ice officials, coaches, parents, and other executive members to provide a positive and safe experience for all participants. Support programs that train and educate players, coaches, parents, officials and volunteers.
- Promote and publicize your programs.
- Never appear for an association event while intoxicated by drugs or alcohol.
- Communicate with parents by being available to answer questions and address problems throughout the season.
- Treat all players, coaches, and other volunteers with fairness, to promote fair play and sportsmanship.
- Recruit volunteers, including coaches, who demonstrate qualities conducive to being role models to the youth in our sport.
- Perform your duties impartially, in furtherance of the aims of SMHA. Do not use your position or influence to further purely personal objectives.

19. HAZING

Hazing is a humiliating and degrading initiation rite in which a player is forced to participate in order to be accepted. Hockey Canada, Alliance Hockey, and SMHA take a strong stand as it relates to initiations and hazing of players. Hazing is against Hockey Canada's regulation R4:

Any player, team official, executive member of a team, club association or any other Hockey Canada member having participated in or condoned any incidents of hazing shall be subject to a suspension for a period of not less than one year. Notwithstanding the prescribed minimum suspension of one (1) year, in the event that the Branch would consider that such suspension would create undue hardship, given the circumstances, it may impose a lesser penalty, if it has received approval from the Hockey Canada Officers.