

Bullying & Harrassment Policy

AVMHA Prevention of Abuse, Bullying and Harassment Policy

This policy statement applies to all playing members, non-playing members, volunteers, parents, spectators, and employees (whether permanent, contract, temporary or casual). It applies to interpersonal and electronic communication.

Abuse, bullying and/or harassment of athletes, officials or volunteers under the grossly offensive rationale that the abusive behavior is "motivational" or perceived as "justifiable" will not be tolerated. Our first priority will always be the players and minor officials – they will be treated with dignity and respect. There is zero tolerance for abuse of children, officials and volunteers at AVMHA.

This policy aims to:

1. Prevent the verbal, emotional, psychological, and physical or sexual harassment/abuse of anyone within the association.
2. Allow the association to move quickly and decisively if abuse, bullying or harassment occurs.
3. Provide an avenue for individuals to bring their concerns forward with the knowledge that they will be addressed in a timely fashion.

1. Abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care which causes physical injury or emotional damage to a child. A common characteristic of all forms of abuse against children and youth is an abuse of power or authority and/or breach of trust. Some behaviors which are defined as harassment or bullying, when the behavior breaches human rights or appropriate relationship/conduct boundaries, can also constitute abuse.

Information about one's legal duty to report and circumstances under which reporting must occur according to child protection legislation is available at www.hockeycanada.ca.

1(a) Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is psychologically destructive behavior or attack on a child's self-esteem by a person in a position of power, authority or trust. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, berating, intimidating, isolating, hazing or ignoring a child or youth's needs

1(b) Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when a person in a position of power, authority or trust purposefully injures, or threatens to injure, a child or youth. This may take the form of slapping, shaking, hitting, kicking, pulling hair or ears, throwing, shoving, grabbing, hazing, or using excessive exercise as a form of punishment (list is non-exhaustive).

Neglect is also a form of abuse where chronic inattention in a hockey context may apply, for example, when an injured player is forced to play.

1(c) Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is when a child or youth is used by a child or youth with more power or an adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. There are two categories of sexual abuse: contact and non-contact.

Contact

– Touched or fondled in sexual areas – Forced to touch another person's sexual areas – Kissed or held in a sexual manner - Forced to perform oral sex -Intercourse (vaginal or anal) -Penetration with an object or finger (vaginal or anal) – Sexually oriented hazing

Non-Contact

– Obscene remarks on phone, computer or in notes – Voyeurism – Shown pornography – Sexually intrusive questions or comments – Forced to pose for sexual photos or video – Forced to self-masturbate or forced to watch others masturbate Those involved with AVMHA in providing hockey opportunities for participants understand and agree that abuse or neglect as described above, may be the subject of a criminal investigation and/or disciplinary procedures. Failure to report an offense and thereby failure to provide safety for participants may render the adult who keeps silent legally liable under the provincial child protection acts.

2. Bullying

Bullying involves a person expressing their power through the humiliation and/or intimidation of another person. At AVMHA, bullying is considered any conduct or comment by a person towards a player, official, volunteer or non-playing member that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would hurt, insult, humiliate, degrade or exclude him or her. These inappropriate behaviors are typically cruel, demeaning and hostile toward the target(s). Bullying typically occurs between children under the age of 12, between youth or between adults and is not addressed under human rights legislation.

Bullying can be broken down into four types;

1. Physical: hit or kick victims; take/damage personal property, shoving, confining.

2. Verbal: name calling; insults; constant teasing, spreading damaging rumors

3. Relational: try to cut off victims from social connection by convincing peers to exclude or reject a certain person.

: All areas of internet, such as email, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and other social-networking internet misuse; Mobile threats by text messaging & calls; Misuse of associated technology i.e. camera & video.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of tactics used by bullies to control their targets:

1. Yelling and screaming directed at the target
2. Continually criticizing the target's abilities
3. Blaming the target of the bullying for mistakes
4. Making unreasonable demands related to performance
5. Repeated insults or put downs of the target
6. Threats to remove or restrict opportunities or privileges
7. Denying or discounting the target's accomplishment
8. Threats of and actual physical violence
9. Verbal aggression or insults, calling someone derogatory names

3. Harassment

Harassment is defined as conduct, gestures or comments which are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, malicious, degrading or otherwise offensive to an individual or group of individuals, and which create a hostile or intimidating environment for work or sports activities, or which negatively affect performance or work conditions. Harassment may occur among anyone between peers (eg: player to player of the same age group, parent to official, coach to coach) or between someone in a position of power or authority and an adult in a subordinate position (eg: coach to player, sports administrator to employee).

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of harassment:

1. Verbal aggression or insults, calling someone derogatory names
2. Unwelcome jokes, innuendo or teasing about a person's body, looks, race, sexual orientation etc.
3. Condescending, patronizing, threatening or punishing actions which undermine self-esteem
4. Practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, or may endanger a person's safety
5. Degrading or inappropriate hazing rituals
6. Vandalizing personal belongings
7. Spreading malicious rumors.
8. Unwanted or unnecessary physical contact including touching, patting, pinching
9. Unwanted conduct, comments, gestures or invitations of a sexual nature which are likely to cause offence or humiliation, or which might on reasonable grounds be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on any opportunity within minor hockey.
10. sexual assault or physical assault

It is important to note that the behaviours described in items 8-10, when directed towards a child or youth, constitute abuse under child protection legislation. This may also be true of other behaviors. In such cases, it is legally required to report to the RCMP and/or Ministry of Child and Family Services.

4. Reporting Complaints and Concerns

Abuse or suspected abuse may be reported to any member of the AVMHA Executive Committee or team staff via the concern form available on the website or if you wish to remain anonymous, reports may be sent by mail or deposited in the locked box outside the AVMHA office.

1. If possible, the individual should inform the bullying or harassing individual that his/her behaviour is not welcome.
2. If unwanted behaviour continues or it is not possible to address concerns with the individual, complaints/concerns may be addressed to:
 - a. Team Manager (unless the situation involves the team manager, in this case go directly to Division Manager or Rep Coordinator)
 - b. Division Manager, Rep Coordinator, Chair of the Discipline Committee
 - c. Executive via the secretary in writing if no resolution.

5. Disciplinary Process

Breaches of the Code of Conduct or this policy may be grounds for sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the association. In the case of allegations of abuse, an indefinite suspension will be issued pending the outcome of an investigation by the Disciplinary Committee.

1. Complaints or breaches of the Code of Conduct may result in a warning letter/email.
2. If the breach of the Code of Conduct is not resolved, is deemed serious in nature or violates the Prevention of Abuse, Bullying and Harassment Policy; the complaint will be directed to the disciplinary committee.
3. The committee will hear evidence related to the incident(s), including speaking to the individual and others who have knowledge of the incident(s), or receiving written statements. If a player under the age of 18 is involved a parent or guardian must be present.
4. A letter detailing the results and the consequences, if any, will be sent to the individual, and other involved parties. A copy will be kept on file in the office of the Association.

In recommending disciplinary action, the committee may consider the following options depending on the nature and severity of the bullying/harassment:

-Verbal apology -Written apology -Letter of warning from the organization -Suspension from activities -Removal of certain privileges of membership, including a ban from the arena -Expulsion from membership -Any other discipline deemed appropriate

6. Retaliation

AVMHA absolutely prohibits retaliation against anyone, especially players, for raising or helping to address a concern about a violation of the Code of Conduct or the Prevention of Abuse, Bullying and Harassment Policy. Retaliation (including limiting ice time, placing restrictions on a player, removing privileges, treating with disdain or indifference) is grounds for sanctions, up to and including immediate expulsion from the association and removal of all associated rights and privileges. Situations where retaliation could potentially be a concern should be raised as early as possible at the level felt appropriate to the situation.

Failure to comply with disciplinary action shall result in suspension from membership in AVMHA. It is a privilege to belong to the AVMHA and all deserve to have an experience that is rewarding, enjoyable, and free from bullying and harassment.