

SECTION VIII: ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Anti-Bullying

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. Canada Soccer is committed to providing a safe, caring, and friendly environment for all participants.

Preventing and reporting bullying and cyber-bullying are core elements of the Respect Training outlined in Section 13.13.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Although some elements of bullying are included in the Canada Soccer Code of Ethics and Conduct and can be considered a form of harassment, a more specific definition is as follows:

Bullying is the severe or repeated use of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another individual that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

1. causing physical or emotional harm to the other person or damage to the other person's property;
2. placing the other person in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
3. creating a hostile environment for the other person at any soccer activity;
4. infringing on the rights of the other person at any soccer activity; or
5. materially and substantially disrupting the orderly operation of any soccer activity

The objectives of the Anti-Bullying Policy are:

1. To make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated in any form.
2. To define bullying and educate all coaches, team personnel, athletes, and parents about the types of behaviour that constitute bullying.
3. To inform all coaches, team personnel, athletes, and parents that there is a policy and protocol, should any bullying issues arise.
4. To make clear the responsibility of the organization and coaches, team personnel, athletes, and parents to report bullying.
5. To spread the word that bullying is taken seriously and that all athletes can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

If bullying does occur, incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, team personnel, or board member.

REPORTING PROCEDURE

An athlete who feels that he or she has been bullied should do one or more of the following things:

- ▶ Talk to their parents;
- ▶ Talk to a coach, Board member, or other designated individual;
- ▶ Write a letter or email to a coach, Board member, or other designated individual;
- ▶ Make a report to their Provincial/Territorial Soccer Organization.

There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint under this procedure, but every effort should be made to bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate organizational leadership as quickly as possible to stop the bullying behaviour as soon as possible and to make sure that memories are fresh, and behaviour can be accurately recalled.

HOW TO HANDLE BULLYING

If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT using the following steps:

1. Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help.
2. Separate the children involved.
3. Make sure everyone is safe.
4. Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
5. Stay calm. Reassure the children involved, including bystanders.
6. Model respectful behaviour when you intervene.

If bullying is occurring at the organization or it is reported to be occurring at our organization, address the bullying by FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED and SUPPORTING THE CHILDREN INVOLVED using the following approach:

FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

1. First, we get the facts.
 - a. Keep all the involved children separate.
 - b. Get the story from several sources, both adults and children, and gather all available information regarding the circumstances under which the incident occurred.
 - c. Listen without blaming.
 - d. Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.
2. Then, determine if it's bullying. There are many behaviours that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else.
 - a. Review the definition of bullying;
 - b. To determine if the behaviour is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:
 - i. What is the history between the children involved?

- ii. Have there been past conflicts?
- iii. Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength and can include things like the “popularity” of the children involved.
- iv. Has this happened before? Is the child worried it will happen again?
- c. Remember that it may not matter “who started it.” Some children who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behaviour
- d. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the children involved.

SUPPORTING THE CHILDREN INVOLVED

1. Support the children who are being bullied

- a. Listen and focus on the child. Learn what’s been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- b. Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
 - i. Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out.
 - ii. Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the organization and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
- c. Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

2. Address bullying behaviour

- a. Make sure the child who engaged in the bullying behaviour understands why his or her behaviour is unacceptable. Young people who bully must learn their behaviour is wrong and harms others.
- b. Show children that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behaviour when addressing the problem.
- c. Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
 - i. Sometimes children bully to fit in or to make fun of someone who is different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
 - ii. Other times children act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These children may be in need of additional support.
- d. Involve the children who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others. For example, the child can:

- i. Write a letter apologizing to the athlete who was bullied.
- ii. Do a good deed for the person who was bullied, for the organization, or for others in your community.
- iii. Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.
- e. Avoid strategies that don’t work or have negative consequences:
 - i. Zero tolerance or “or three strikes, you’re out” are generally unsuccessful strategies. Young people may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
 - ii. Similarly, conflict resolution and peer mediation often don’t work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset children who have been bullied.
 - f. Follow-up. After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people. For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good teammate.
- 3. Support bystanders who witness bullying. Every day, children witness bullying. They want to help, but don’t know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stop bullying when they see it happening:
 - a. Be a friend to the person being bullied.
 - b. Tell a trusted adult — a parent, coach or board member.
 - c. Help the children being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. “Let’s go, practice is about to start.”
 - d. Set a good example by not bullying others.
 - e. Don’t give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.

For a Sample Anti-Bullying Policy, please refer to Section 13.13.

Change Room

Organizations, facility providers, and those with responsibility for children and young people have a general duty of care towards them; however, there are no specific legal requirements regarding the use of changing facilities.

This information is; therefore, intended as a practical guidance to support individuals and organizations to consider issues relevant to their particular context; and to develop and implement policies and procedures that provide a safe environment for children and young people.