

## **BULLYING POLICY**

### **Statement of Intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our association. If bullying does occur, all athletes or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING association*. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the coach, manager, coordinator or any executive member.

### **What Is Bullying?**

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. It is done to intimidate, coerce, fear, control, embarrass or exclude.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding cleats/clothing, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

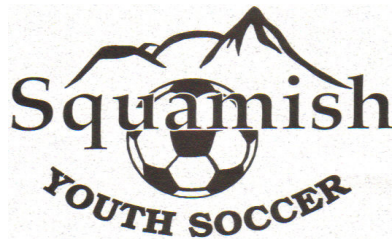
Bullying may be:

- Planned or unintentional
- Individual or group action(s)
- Of an isolated or continual nature

### **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Athletes who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

This association has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. Bullying will not be tolerated.

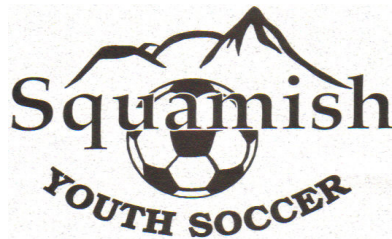


## **Recommended Action If You Are Bullied**

1. You may try to deal with it yourself – but don't feel you have to, you will be supported
  - stay calm.
  - ignore it (use self talk and remember often those who bully are disguising their own problems) walk away.
  - ask them to stop
  - identify a network of trusted adults or peers you can talk to, seek support from your network - it is good to let someone know what is happening.
  - *If this does not stop the bullying, persist!*
2. You may choose to confront the person
  - take a support person e.g. a friend, an executive member, or an older athlete.
  - stand up for yourself - let them know how it makes you feel.
  - tell them you don't like what they are doing and you want it to stop.
  - tell them they are breaking association rules that the association will enforce.
  - *If this does not stop the bullying, persist!*
3. You may seek help - you will be supported
  - go to an association official, coach, parent, another adult
  - tell the adult everything.
  - *Keep on telling until the bullying stops!*

## **Procedure**

1. Report bullying incidents to the coach, manager, coordinator or a member of the executive.
2. Coach/adult needs to contact the executive immediately.
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the association will initiate disciplinary action.



### **Recommended Action**

If the association decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation they should follow the procedure outlined below.

- 1) Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
- 2) If this fails/not appropriate a small panel (including executive members and the division coordinator) should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity.
- 3) The same panel should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken.
- 4) The same panel should also interview any witnesses to gather additional information; again, minutes should be taken.
- 5) If bullying has in their view taken place the athletes should be warned and put on notice of further action (see below). Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
- 6) All coaches involved with both athletes should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

### **Consequences For Those Who Bully**

Athletes found to be bullying teammates or members of other teams/clubs may face consequences including:

- Restitution for any damage to property or personal possessions
- Temporary or permanent suspension
- Benching

***Any retaliation by athletes, or their parents, against someone who reports bullying will be dealt with very seriously.***

### **Prevention:**

- Bullying discussion will be added to initial meeting with coaches.
- Bullying policy will be added to the association's web page.
- Bullying policy will be emailed to all parents at the beginning of each season.