



Last updated May 2018

## Harassment and Abuse Policy

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The North Shore Female Ice Hockey Association (“NSFIHA”) is committed to providing an environment in which players and other participants in activities of the NSFIHA are free of harassment and abuse. This policy applies to all persons participating in activities of the NSFIHA including players, parents, volunteers, coaches and other team officials, referees, employees, directors, officers, committee members and other representatives of the NSFIHA.

### **2. Harassment**

- 2.1 Harassment is defined as conduct, gestures or comments which are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, malicious, degrading, physically harmful or otherwise offensive to an individual or group of individuals and which create a hostile or intimidating environment for work or sport activities. Examples of behavior that constitute harassment or abuse include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome jokes, innuendo or teasing about a person’s appearance, attire, age, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation;
- Condescending, patronizing, threatening or punishing actions which undermine self-esteem or diminish performance;
- Practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, endanger a person’s safety or negatively affect performance;
- Unwanted or unnecessary physical contact including touching, patting or pinching;
- Unwelcome flirtation or sexual advances;
- Any form of hazing or initiation practices;
- Bullying;
- Any form of physical assault;
- Behaviours such as those described above which, while they may not be directed towards individuals or groups, have the effect of creating a negative or hostile environment; or

- Any other conduct or circumstances set out by applicable law as constituting harassment.

### **3. Procedure in the Event of Harassment**

- 3.1 It is the policy of the NSFIHA that harassment in all its forms will not be tolerated during the course of any NSFIHA activity or program.
- 3.2 The NSFIHA recognizes that not all incidents of harassment are equally serious in their consequences. Harassment covers a wide spectrum of behaviors. The response to harassment must be equally broad in range and appropriate to the behavior in question.
- 3.3 Most incidents of harassment should be corrected promptly and informally (e.g. by the Coach), taking a constructive approach with the aim of bringing about a change in negative attitudes and behavior. More serious incidents may require a more formal approach involving those outside of the team staff.
- 3.4 Complaints should be handled in a timely, sensitive, responsible and confidential manner.
- 3.5 Anyone making a complaint which is found to be clearly unfounded, false, malicious or frivolous may be subject to discipline.

### **4. Resolution of Harassment Complaints**

- 4.1 A person who has experienced harassment, any person who witnesses harassment or any person who believes that harassment has occurred is encouraged to make it known that the behavior is contrary to this policy. If confronting the harasser is not feasible, or if after confronting the harasser the behavior continues, the person who has experienced the harassment, has witnessed the harassment or who believes that harassment has occurred should report the matter to the President.
- 4.2 A team official (on-ice or off-ice) who becomes aware of harassment during an on-ice event will, at a stoppage of play, identify the offending individual and through discussion with team officials, request that the offending individuals cease this unacceptable behavior. If the behavior continues or otherwise merits reporting to the President, the official will document the offense or action and forward to the President.
- 4.3 Once an incident has been reported to the President, the President will within a reasonable amount of time advise the applicable parents or guardians of the incident (if the person who has experienced or alleged to have committed the harassment is a minor) and assist in the informal resolution of the complaint, where appropriate. If informal resolution of the harassment complaint is not appropriate or possible, and if the person who has experienced the harassment, has witnessed the harassment or who believes that harassment has occurred decides to pursue a complaint, a formal complaint process shall be conducted in accordance with the NSFIHA's Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy.
- 4.4 For greater certainty, nothing in this policy prohibits or precludes any party from involving appropriate governmental authorities, as such party deems appropriate.

## **5. Abuse**

5.1 Child abuse is any form of verbal, physical, emotional and/or sexual mistreatment or lack of care which causes physical or emotional harm to a child. A common characteristic of all forms of abuse against children and youths is an abuse of power or authority and/or a breach of trust. Within British Columbia a person is considered a child up to the age of nineteen.

Abuse can include:

- Emotional Abuse;
- Physical Abuse;
- Sexual Abuse;
- Exposure to Family Violence; and
- Neglect; or
- Any other conduct or circumstances set out by applicable law as constituting abuse.

## **6. Procedure in the Event of Abuse**

6.1 When any person has reasonable grounds to suspect that a participant minor may have been abused or may be being abused or is otherwise in need of protection, he / she shall immediately report this belief to the appropriate authority (the police or a representative of the Ministry of Children and Families) and he/she shall advise the President that he/she has so reported. If there is any doubt regarding the correct jurisdiction for an incident of harassment or abuse the President may be contacted for guidance.

6.2 The NSFIHA may decide to take no further action until such time as the applicable authority has completed its investigation. If such action is taken by the NSFIHA, the matter shall be dealt with in accordance with the NSFIHA's Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy.

## **7. Considerations in Disciplinary Action**

7.1 Following any complaint process as outlined in the NSFIHA Dispute Resolution and Discipline Policy, the appropriate disciplinary action in the event that harassment or abuse is found to have occurred should take into consideration aggravating or mitigating circumstances. These include:

- The nature and severity of the harassment or abuse;
- Whether the harassment or abuse involved any physical contact and, in particular, whether the contact was sexual in nature;
- Whether the harassment or abuse was an isolated incident or part of an ongoing pattern of behavior;

- The nature of the relationship between the complainant and respondent and, in particular, whether there was a marked difference in power and authority between them;
- The age of the complainant and the difference in age between the complainant and respondent;
- Whether the respondent had been involved in previous harassment incidents;
- Whether the respondent admitted responsibility and expressed a willingness to change; and
- Whether the respondent retaliated against the complainant.

## **8. General**

- 8.1 The President may delegate its powers and responsibilities under this Policy to any member of the Board.