

Mavericks Water Polo

Policy: Anti-Bullying

Date: March 15, 2015

Review/Revision: March 15, 2015

Statement of Intent

Mavericks Water Polo is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members. The Club strives to provide a setting where water polo players will develop self-confidence and be respectful of their peers and coaches as they participate in the different programs.

Competitive Water Polo is a highly physical sport involving physical contact and controlled aggression; indeed, one of the benefits of participation is the opportunity to gain greater self-control in a controlled, safe and secure atmosphere.

Notwithstanding the above, bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our club and will not be tolerated.

All club members should know what to do if they are being bullied or see others being bullied. They should feel confident that when they report bullying, it will be dealt with expeditiously and effectively and that they will be protected from retaliation.

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.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – systematic behaviour with the intention of isolating or excluding a player, such as unfriendly conduct, repeatedly not passing the ball to a particular player, or not including him/her in the game.
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence with the intent of injuring or demeaning a player
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, put-downs, derision
- Cyber – all areas of the internet

Consequences to Bullies

In very serious situations of bullying, including but not limited to: assault or sexual assault the police may be called and the member may be suspended immediately, without any refund of fees paid and/or owing.

In less drastic situations, the outcomes will be less drastic, but **discipline will be progressive if bullying behaviour is repeated or if retaliation is attempted as a result of reporting bullying.**

Bullies will be spoken to by a coach or team manager or board member in an attempt to give the bully a chance to understand the impact of his/her behavior on others and to reform his/her behavior. At the very least, a sincere apology will be required in a meeting with the victim. To ensure that the club is aware of any on-going pattern of bullying, a written record of each incident, signed by all of the parties, will be set to the club executive and maintained in club confidential records.

If this sort of mediation efforts fail and the bullying continues, the club will initiate disciplinary proceedings according to the club constitution.

- A panel of 3 persons (any combination of coaches, board members and team managers) will be struck. This panel will have separate meetings with the member who alleges bullying and his/her family; those who have witnessed and reported bullying and their family; and those who are alleged to be doing the bullying and their family. Minutes of these meetings will be taken and shared with meeting participants, to ensure that everyone has the same understanding of the meeting as the panel. This will constitute a written report which will be signed by all attendees.
- After considering the evidence and whether or not this is a first or subsequent occurrence, the panel will decide on an appropriate action and advise the head coach, the club president and all other parties to the investigation. The action plan will be added to the written report and signed by all participants.
- Any of the parties to the investigation may appeal the decision of the panel to the board. The decision of the Board is final

The consequences set out by the panel may include but are not limited to:

- verbal and written apology
- volunteer service for the club (with no volunteer credits earned);
- suspension from practices or tournament for a given period or
- termination of membership.

In the event of termination or suspension, there will be no refund of club fees already paid and any remaining postdated cheques will be deposited.

If membership is terminated, the termination and the reasons therefore will be reported the Ontario Water Polo Association.

Implementation

All club members, coaches, volunteers and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and should know the policy and what to do if bullying is experienced, witnessed or reported.

- Anti-bullying statement will form part of the Code of Conduct. When members (and in the case of minors, their parents/guardians), sign their agreement to the Code of Conduct, this will also include agreement to the Anti Bullying Policy
- At the beginning of the program year, the head coach will refresh all coaches about the club's policy position on bullying, what bullying is and the steps that must be taken when bullying is either observed by a coach or reported to a coach. Any new coaches that join the club during the program year will also be given this information.
- At the AGM, members and their families will be refreshed on the club's policy position on bullying, what bullying is and the steps that should be taken when bullying is experienced or observed by a member. Members will also be refreshed on this at a team meeting at the beginning of the season. **Members will be reminded that it is everyone's business to help prevent bullying and that if they witness bullying, they should help to stop it and/ report it. And if they are bullied, they should report it.** Members and their families will also be refreshed on the consequences of bullying. This information will also be posted on the club web site.
- At the beginning of the season, the president or other board executive will meet with Team Managers and refresh them on the club's policy position on bullying, what bullying is and the steps that must be taken when bullying is either observed by a Team Manager or reported to a Team Manager.

How to Report Bullying

Members can report bullying to their coach, their team manager, the head coach or directly to the Board. In the case of reporting to the Board, bullying may be reported to the President, Brad Myers at 416-231-1677 or the Treasurer, Nancy Bardecki at 416-605-9468. If a team manager or coach receives a report on bullying and it is not a repeat incident, he or she may decide to manage the situation in a way that he or she feels is appropriate. In all other circumstances, the coach or team manager should report the situation to the board.