



HARASSMENT AND BULLYING POLICY

The Watchung Hills Soccer Association (“WWSA”) is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of its athletes. The Association prohibits acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying of an athlete, regardless of whether the athletes are on the same team or opposing teams. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Harassment, intimidation, or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts an athlete’s ability to participate in competition. Since athletes learn by example, coaches, volunteers, parents, and employees must demonstrate appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation, or bullying.

The WWSA expects athletes to conduct themselves in keeping with their levels of development, maturity and demonstrated capabilities with proper regard for the rights and welfare of other athletes, coaches, parents, and volunteers. All athletes, coaches, volunteers, and employees are expected to behave in a way that creates a supportive and healthy environment.

Bullying is an intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing, or willfully tolerating by another person, physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership. Bullying further is any act or conduct described as bullying under federal or state law. Examples of bullying includes: (i) physical behavior (e.g. hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, slapping an athlete, or throwing at, or hitting an athlete with, objects such as sporting equipment); or (ii) verbal and emotional behaviors (e.g. teasing, ridiculing, intimidating, spreading rumors, making false statements, or using electronic communications, social media, or other technology to harass, frighten, intimidate or humiliate).

Harassment is a repeated pattern of physical and/or non-physical behaviors that: (i) are intended to cause fear, humiliation or annoyance, (ii) offend or degrade, (iii) create a hostile environment, or (iv) reflect discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority or power over an individual athlete or group based on gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression or mental or physical disability. Harassment further is any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law. Examples of harassment includes: (i) physical offenses (e.g. hitting, pushing, punching, beating, biting, striking, kicking, choking, slapping an athlete or participant, or throwing at or hitting an athlete with objects including sporting equipment); or non-physical offenses (e.g. making negative or disparaging comments about an athlete’s sexual orientation, gender expression, disability, religion, skin color, or ethnic traits,



displaying offensive materials, gestures, or symbols, or withholding or reducing playing time to an athlete based on his or her sexual orientation).

Harassment, intimidation, or bullying conduct includes, but is not limited to, behavior, whether it is oral, physical, written, electronic, or other technological expression, directed at another individual that reasonably has the effect of:

1. Causing physical or emotional harm to the other individual or damage to the other member's property;
2. Placing the other individual in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
3. Creating a hostile environment for the other individual; or
4. Disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any WHSA activity (which for the purposes of this section shall include, without limitation, practices, games, workouts and other team events or activities).

The Association prohibits active or passive support for acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. Athletes are encouraged to support other athletes who:

1. Walk away from acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying when they see them;
2. Constructively attempt to stop acts of harassment, intimidation, or bullying;
3. Provide support to athletes who have been subjected to harassment, intimidation, or bullying; and
4. Report acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying to the individuals listed below.

All individuals who experience or witness a violation of this harassment and bullying policy, or otherwise believe they are the subject of harassment, intimidation, or bullying, are strongly encouraged to report the incident. Athletes who feel that they have been subjected to or witnessed harassment, intimidation, and bullying should do one of the following things:

1. Talk to their parents;
2. Notify their team coach;
3. Notify any other coach, employee or volunteer; or



4. Notify any member of the Board of Directors.

All coaches, employees, and volunteers are required to report all incidents that violate this policy to the Board of Directors. Coaches may make initial disciplinary actions against any individual or individuals who have violated this policy. However, the final decision on discipline lies with the Board of Directors, which shall consider input from the team's coach and/or the Director of Coaching.

The Board of Directors shall consider the following factors when determining the disciplinary consequences for athletes that have been found to have committed harassment, intimidation, or bullying:

1. Age, developmental and maturity levels of the parties involved;
2. Degrees of harm;
3. Surrounding circumstances;
4. Nature and severity of the behavior(s);
5. Incidences of past or continuing patterns of behavior;
6. Relationships between the parties involved; and
7. Context in which the alleged incidents occurred.

Any individual or group of individuals found responsible for committing an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying will be subject to discipline, as determined by the Board of Directors. Disciplinary action may include individual disciplinary action (including suspension, probation, or removal from the team), team disciplinary action, or termination of the team. Depending on the circumstances, the Board of Directors also may consider remedial measure designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the problem, and/or protect and provide support for the victim(s).

The Board of Directors also will impose appropriate consequences and remedial actions to an adult who commits an act of harassment and/or bullying. The disciplinary or remedial actions taken shall be at the complete discretion of the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors prohibits any person from falsely accusing another as a means of retaliation or as a means of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in falsely accusing another shall be determined by the Board of Directors after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances.



The Board of Directors prohibits any Board member, coach, volunteer, or employee who has contact from engaging in reprisal, retaliation, or false accusation against a victim, witness, or one with reliable information, or any other person who has reliable information about an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying or who reports an act of harassment, intimidation, or bullying. The consequence and appropriate remedial action for a person who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Board of Directors after consideration of the nature, severity, and circumstances. All suspected acts of reprisal or retaliation will be taken seriously and appropriate responses will be made in accordance with the totality of the circumstances.

Nothing contained in this Policy shall prohibit, discourage, or prevent any athlete, coach, volunteer, employee, or Board member from reporting any potential crime to law enforcement officials.

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