



# **Axemen Lacrosse Association Policies on the Prevention of Harassment, Bullying and Abuse**

**2018**

## **I. Introduction**

This document sets out the principles and practices of Axemen Lacrosse Association (the “Association”) with regards to abusive behavior, harassment, and bullying towards participants. The principles and policies are based on similar principles and policies adopted by Hockey Canada.

## **II. INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF THE RECOGNITION AND PREVENTION OF ABUSE POLICY AND THE ANTI-HARASSMENT/ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

Some behaviours which are defined as abuse, when a child or youth’s protection is at risk, can also constitute harassment or bullying, when the behaviour breaches human rights or appropriate relationship/conduct boundaries. The Association’s Harassment/Bullying Policy covers such behaviours. Together, the two policies are intended to address the entire spectrum of abusive, bullying and harassing behaviours.

## **III. Recognition and Prevention of Abuse Policy**

### **A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The Association is committed to keeping our youth safe. Protecting participants from all forms of abuse and neglect, whether emotional, physical or sexual, is an important element of safety. The Association considers any form of abuse or neglect to be unacceptable and will do all it can to prevent this intolerable social problem. To this end, the Association will promote awareness of all forms of abuse and neglect by providing educational materials and programs for participants, parents, and volunteers. Through the use of these strategies, the Association will send a clear message to all potential abusers and sexual predators that hockey participants are not easy targets. The Association is committed to the highest possible standards of care for its participants.

**B. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Association that there shall be no abuse and neglect, whether physical, emotional or sexual of any participant in any of its programs. The Association expects every parent and volunteer to take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of its participants and protect them from any form of maltreatment.

**1. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional and/or sexual mistreatment or lack of care which causes physical injury or emotional damage to a child. A common characteristic of all forms of abuse against children and youth is an abuse of power or authority and/or breach of trust. For complete information, consult Hockey Canada's "Speak Out! Act Now! A Guide for preventing and responding to Abuse and Harassment for Sports Clubs and Associations".

**2. EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse is a chronic attack on a child's self-esteem; it is psychologically destructive behaviour by a person in a position of power, authority or trust. It can take the form of name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, berating, intimidating, isolating, hazing or ignoring the child's needs.

**3. PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse is when a person in a position of power or trust purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or youth. This may take the form of slapping, hitting, shaking, kicking, pulling hair or ears, throwing, shoving, grabbing, hazing or excessive exercise as a form of punishment.

**4. NEGLECT**

Neglect is chronic inattention to the basic necessities of life such as clothing, shelter, nutritious diet, education, good hygiene, supervision, medical and dental care, adequate rest, safe environment, moral guidance and discipline, exercise and fresh air. This may occur in hockey when injuries are not adequately treated or players are made to play with injuries, equipment is inadequate or unsafe, no-one intervenes when team members are persistently harassing another player, or road trips are not properly supervised.

**5. SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse is when a young person is used by an older child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. Sexual abuse may be contact or non-contact. Examples of each are:

CONTACT	NON-CONTACT
touched or fondled in sexual areas	obscene remarks on phone/computer or in

	notes
forced to touch another person's sexual areas	voyeurism
kissed or held in a sexual manner	shown pornography
forced to perform oral sex	forced to watch sexual acts
vaginal or anal intercourse	sexually intrusive questions and comments
vaginal or anal penetration with an object or finger	forced to pose for sexual photographs, videos or webcams
sexually oriented hazing	forced to self-masturbate or forced to watch others masturbate

#### 6. DUTY TO REPORT

Abuse and neglect are community problems requiring urgent attention. The Association is committed to help reduce and prevent the abuse and neglect of participants. The Association realizes that persons working closely with children and youth have a special awareness of abusive situations. Therefore these people have a particular reporting responsibility to ensure the safety of Canada's young, by knowing their provincial protection acts and following through as required. Alberta has mandatory reporting laws regarding the abuse and neglect of children and youth. Consequently, it is the policy of the Association that every parent or volunteer who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a participant is or may be suffering or may have suffered from emotional, physical abuse and neglect and/or sexual abuse shall immediately report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to the local child protection agency and/or the local police detachment. Alberta's Human Services website <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/> provides further resources in this regard. Failure to report an offence and thereby failure to provide safety for participants may render the adult who keeps silent legally liable for conviction under the provincial child protection acts.

## IV. Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy

This Policy sets out the principles and practices of the Association regarding bullying and harassment.

### A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Association is committed to providing an environment which prohibits discriminatory practices and bullying. Harassment is a form of discrimination which is prohibited by human rights legislation in Canada. Bullying involves a person expressing their power through the humiliation of another person. Bullying may be a form of harassment but also has some of its own defining characteristics. The sport setting is one setting in which bullying may occur. In some cases coaches and players use bullying tactics deliberately to motivate performance and to weaken opponents. The Association supports the right of all participants (athletes, volunteers and parents), to participate in all Association activities free from any form of harassment or bullying. Further, the Association emphasizes the

importance of eliminating harassment and bullying in hockey as a key element in ensuring the safety of young participants. A sports environment which actively discourages harassment and bullying and builds relationships based on trust and mutual respect is an environment which discourages the abuse of children and youth, and encourages the overall development of individuals. In order to further these objectives, the Association will make every reasonable effort to respond quickly and effectively to complaints or disclosures of harassment or bullying.

## **B. POLICY**

It is the policy of the Association that harassment and bullying in all its forms will not be tolerated during the course of any Association activity or program. Accordingly, each Association parent and volunteer is responsible for making every reasonable effort to uphold this commitment. Specifically, this includes refraining from harassing or bullying behaviour, responding promptly and informally to minor incidents of harassment or bullying and following guidelines for reporting or responding to more serious complaints of harassment or bullying. Players and other participants are expected to refrain from harassing or bullying behaviour and are encouraged to report incidents of harassment or bullying.

### **1. DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT**

Harassment is defined as conduct, gestures or comments which are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, malicious, degrading or otherwise offensive to an individual or group of individuals, and which create a hostile or intimidating environment for work or sports activities, or which negatively affect performance or work conditions. Any of the different forms of harassment must be based on grounds prohibited in human rights legislation, such as race, ethnicity, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability, or sexual orientation. Harassment may occur: between peers (e.g.: player to player of the same age group, parent to official, coach to coach) or between someone in a position of power or authority and someone in a subordinate position (e.g.: coach to player). The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of harassment:

1. unwelcome jokes, innuendo or teasing about a person's body, looks, race, sexual orientation etc.
2. condescending, patronizing, threatening or punishing actions which undermine self-esteem
3. practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, or may endanger a person's safety
4. degrading or inappropriate hazing rituals
5. unwanted or unnecessary physical contact including touching, patting, pinching
6. unwanted conduct, comments, gestures or invitations of a sexual nature which are likely to cause offence or humiliation, or which might on reasonable

grounds be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment or on any opportunity for training or advancement

7. sexual assault or physical assault.

It is important to note that the behaviours described in items 5 to 7, when directed towards a child or youth, constitute abuse under child protection legislation. This may also be true of other behaviours, for example, certain hazing practices. In such cases, the duty to report provisions of the Recognition and Prevention of Abuse Policy are applicable.

## **2. DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

Bullying involves a person expressing their power through the humiliation of another person. Bullying occurs between people at any age and is not addressed under human rights legislation. It is inappropriate behaviours that are typically cruel, demeaning and hostile toward the bullying targets. Bullying is similar to harassment but the behaviours are not addressed under human rights laws. Bullies are typically cruel, demeaning and hostile towards the targets of their bullying. The actual issue of bullying is not addressed by the law, except when the behaviour does become a criminal issue – e.g. extortion, physical assault etc. Bullying can be broken down into four types; physical (hit or kick victims; take/damage personal property), verbal (name calling; insults; constant teasing), relational (try to cut off victims from social connection by convincing peers to exclude or reject a certain person), and cyber bullying. The following is a non-exhaustive list of tactics used by bullies to control their targets:

1. unwarranted yelling and screaming directed at the target
2. continually criticizing the target's abilities
3. blaming the target of the bullying for mistakes
4. making unreasonable demands related to performance
5. repeated insults or put downs of the target
6. repeated threats to remove or restrict opportunities or privileges
7. denying or discounting the targets accomplishments
8. threats of and actual physical violence.

## **3. SOCIAL MEDIA**

Players, volunteers and parents are reminded that harassment and bullying can occur, and are equally unacceptable, via social media. The Abuse, Harassment and Bullying Policy is equally applicable to comments via social media sites. Social networking is defined as Internet services that allow users to build profiles, share information, videos, images, blog entries, music, etc: Social network platforms focus on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities.

This policy encompasses public communications through such Internet mediums and websites as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and any other social media network. It is applicable to all individuals involved in the operations of the Association. These

individuals (“Participants) include: players and their family, coaches, managers, board members, administrative personnel, referees (BHA) and off-ice officials.

Please note that once published online, comments are on record and cannot be retracted. All Participants are accountable for their comments.

If requested to participate in an online network by a third party as a result of your affiliation with the Association, a Participant should decline the request or obtain the authorization of the Association President.

The following are non-exhaustive examples of conduct through social media and networking mediums that are considered violations of this policy and which may be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in this policy:

- Statements which are critical of Association personnel, its programs, employees, on-ice or off-ice officials, players, members, sponsors, facility staff, or any other participants.
- Divulging confidential information that may include, but is not limited to the following:
  - medical history (injuries or other),
  - game plans or strategies
  - parent and/or player name, address, phone number, email address, etc.
  - other information that is deemed confidential.
- Sharing or divulging photos, videos or comments which promote negative influences or criminal behaviour, including but not limited to:
  - drug use,
  - alcohol abuse,
  - public intoxication,
  - sexual exploitation, etc.
- Online activity that contradicts the current policies of BHA.
- Inappropriate, derogatory, racist or sexist comments of any kind that contradict the policies outlined by BHA on these matters.

#### **4. RESPONSE AND REMEDIES**

It is the position of The Association that harassment and bullying cannot and should not be tolerated in any environment, including hockey. Both harassment and bullying are unacceptable and harmful. The Association recognizes the serious negative impact of all

types of harassment and bullying on personal dignity, individual and group development and performance, enjoyment of the game and in some cases, personal safety. At the same time, the Association recognizes that not all incidents of harassment and bullying are equally serious in their consequences. Both harassment and bullying cover a wide spectrum of behaviours, and the response to both must be equally broad in range, appropriate to the behaviour in question and capable of providing a constructive remedy. There must be no summary justice or hasty punishment. The process of investigation and settlement of any complaint of harassment or bullying must be fair to all parties, allowing adequate opportunity for the presentation of a response to the allegations. Minor incidents of harassment or bullying should be corrected promptly and informally, taking a constructive approach and with the goal of bringing about a change in negative attitudes and behaviour. More serious incidents should be dealt with more formally. Complaints should be handled in a timely, sensitive, responsible and confidential manner. There should be no tolerance of reprisals taken against any party to a complaint. The names of all parties and the circumstances of the complaint should be kept confidential except where disclosure is necessary for the purposes of investigation or taking disciplinary measures. Anyone making a complaint which is found to be clearly unfounded, false, malicious or frivolous may be subject to discipline. Procedures for handling allegations of harassment or bullying are found in the Standing Policies and Procedures of the Blackfoot Hockey Association, as amended from time to time, in the section "Dispute Resolution and Turning Point". This policy does not prevent an appropriate person having authority from taking immediate, informal, corrective action in response to behaviour that, in their view, constitutes a minor incident of harassment or bullying.