



## Halifax Dunbrack Soccer Club

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### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY**

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

*Halifax Dunbrack Soccer Club* (HDSC) recognizes that disagreements are a normal byproduct of participation in sport organizations and that a situation may arise among players, coaches and parents that may lead to a misunderstanding or conflict during the course of the program. HDSC has a responsibility to all stakeholders in the program (players, parents, coaches, staff, and board members) to ensure that matters of concern are resolved in a fair, timely, and appropriate manner. HDSC is committed to providing a mechanism to allow all parties to find a fair resolution through a transparent process.

#### **PURPOSE**

*Halifax Dunbrack Soccer Club* (HDSC) has developed this *Conflict Resolution Policy* to provide the guidelines that parents, players and coaches should use to deal with any conflicts that arise. It is imperative that all steps are followed in the proper order.

Should it be determined that a transgression has occurred that necessitates a remedy, all parties should be aware that the resolution to a problem may include serious consequences. Serious issues may affect a player's eligibility to play for HDSC, a parent's ability to participate in HDSC events, and a coach's ability to participate in a leadership role with HDSC.

All stakeholders should be aware that all allegations of a serious or criminal nature will be reported immediately to the police or relevant agency and will not be investigated by HDSC (see the *Code of Conduct to Protect Children*)

Strict confidentiality, impartiality, fairness and due process must be observed at all times. Any participants found to be engaging in any form of maltreatment, which violates the integrity of participants and undermines the values of HDSC or breaches the *Code of Conduct* may be subjected to disciplinary actions.

All complaints or incident reports should be made in writing and the complainant should contact the Executive Director or the individual occupying a position of authority within HDSC who is designated to respond to the complainant for further direction.

#### **PROCEDURE**

The following are the steps that shall be taken in regard to addressing conflicts until a resolution is reached. These steps must be followed in proper order.

Complaints may be brought for or against a vulnerable participant and they must have a parent/guardian or other adult serve as their representative during the process. At its discretion, HDSC may act as the complainant and initiate the process.



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### **Step 1 – The 24-Hour Rule**

The player/parent/coach shall wait a minimum of 24 hours after the event or conflict. This cooling-off period should be used to validate the facts and collect your thoughts. During, prior and after games and practices are never appropriate places to resolve conflicts.

It is important to discuss the issues with the player prior to initiating this process. Many times, the athlete has information that may resolve the issue.

The exception to this would be in cases where immediate action to deal with a serious matter is concerned (e.g. physical, verbal or sexual abuse or activities of a criminal nature). This should be reported to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will be responsible to notify any other Staff or Board member as required.

If after 24 hours, there is still a conflict or concern, the player/parent/coach shall write out the facts of the conflict or concern on paper. Once written, the player/parent/coach shall review what is written to ensure that there is still a conflict or concern and if there is, proceed to **Step 2**.

### **Step 2 – Player/Parent/Coach Meeting**

The player/parent/coach shall contact the other party and ask to meet outside of normal practice/game times, as soon as possible after the event/concern. The parties should meet within 48 hours of the request being made to discuss the issue. The player/parent/coach shall indicate to the other parties the conflict in writing.

The player/parent/coach requesting a meeting should bring their written, specific concerns to this meeting. Please note that these meetings are not meant to simply complain about general issues related to the team. Parties involved are to remember the goal of this meeting is to solve the problem, not win an argument.

The meeting is to be between the team coach(es) and a single player and/or the parent(s) to deal with a single issue. A player should be represented by their parent(s) in such meetings, and coaches may elect to invite a team manager, or assistant coach(es) to the meeting.

Should the meeting not be on the specific issue as indicated prior to the meeting, any of the parties involved shall have the right to end the meeting.

Multiple player(s)/parent(s) or coach(es) having the same issue should have that issue resolved at a team level meeting. The player(s)/parent(s) may ask the coach or team manager to call a team meeting to discuss the conflicts or concerns. Should there be no resolution and at least one half of the team or the coach(es) feel it necessary, they may proceed to **Step 3**.

**This should all take place within 3 days of the event/conflict.**



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If the issue is resolved at the meeting there is no need for further action by HDSC, however the player(s)/parent(s)/coach(es) should document that an issue was raised and resolved and forward a copy to the Executive Director.

**If Step 2** does not resolve the issue, then both parties must put their concerns in writing, using the *Incident Report* (located on club website) and forward to the Executive Director within 48 hours of the player/parent/coach meeting.

### **Step 3 – Executive Director**

If the player/parent and coach do not agree on a resolution in Step 2, the Executive Director will arrange to meet with the parties within 3 days of receiving written concerns from both parties.

The Executive Director or parties assigned by the Executive Director should gather information as necessary to ensure they have a clear understanding of the facts. If there is a dispute over the facts, statements from witnesses and other relevant evidence may be obtained.

Players may be represented by their parent(s) in such meetings, and coaches may elect to invite a team manager, or assistant coach(es) to the meeting. The Executive Director may invite the Technical Director, Board Member or other staff, for their input on the matter at hand.

Should the meeting not be on the specific issue as indicated prior to the meeting, the Executive Director shall have the right to end the meeting.

If the parties reach an agreement on a resolution at this meeting, there is no need for further action. The Executive Director should inform the Board Executive and Risk Committee Chair in writing that a formal complaint has been brought forward, that a meeting has been held, and that a resolution has been reached.

If the Executive Director cannot help the parties to reach a mutually agreeable resolution, they will forward the letters from the parties to the Chair of the Risk Committee, along with their notes on the matter.

**This should all be done within 7 days of the event/concern.**

### **Step 4 – Risk Committee**

If the issue is not resolved in **Step 3** the Risk Committee will meet as necessary to determine a fair resolution to the issue. Prior to reviewing the complaint, the Risk Committee must ensure that members have no conflict of interest and if so then the committee member must remove themselves from this review and the Committee can decide whether to replace the member for the review.

The Board President will not be permitted to be part of review to allow them to hear an appeal if requested.



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The Risk Committee, should it choose, may call upon all parties involved and other witnesses to give their description of the event or conflict. The Risk Committee shall consider all facts, in conjunction with HDSC Operations Policies and Procedures without parties present.

The Risk Committee's decision will be conveyed to the parties involved, in writing, along with a clear explanation of the rationale behind the decision and any penalties that are applied within seven (7) days of the meeting.

The Risk Committee decision shall be considered as the final resolution to the conflict.

**This should be completed within 14 days of the event/concern.**

### **Appeals**

Those involved in the complaint can appeal the decision of the Risk Committee. The President would chair the review and assign at least two other board members to review the appeal. All members will need to be free of conflict of interest with the complainant and respondent of the review.

Any appeal must be filed within 7 days of the Risk Committee decision to the President of the association. The appeal must be in writing outlining the following:

- Grounds for the appeal
- Detailed reason for the appeal
- All evidence that supports these grounds
- Requested remedy or remedies

For any appeal filed after the 7 days, must request permission including stating the reason that they require an exemption to the 7 days, and it would be up to the appeals committee whether to proceed with the appeal.

If those involved in the complaint appeal are unsatisfied, they can then appeal it to our provincial governing body with *Soccer Nova Scotia* within 7 days of receiving the decision of the appeals committee.

### **Discipline**

When considering appropriate disciplinary action, the risk committee and appeal members shall consider factors such as:

- The nature and severity of the complaint
- Whether it was an isolated incident or part of an ongoing pattern
- The nature of the relationship between the complainant and respondent
- The age of the complainant
- Whether either party was involved in previous incidents
- Whether the respondent admitted responsibility and expressed a willingness to change



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- Whether the respondent retaliated against the complainant
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In invoking sanctions, the following are options:

- Verbal apology
- Written apology
- Letter of reprimand
- Temporary suspension
- Dismissal/expulsion
- Recommendation to escalate to appropriate authority

If the issue is not resolved in **Step 3** the Risk Committee will meet as necessary to determine a fair resolution to the issue.

### **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Code of Conduct: To Protect Children

Parent Code of Conduct

Player Code of Conduct

Coach Code of Conduct

Incident Report

### **HISTORICAL DATES**

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