

## **QC United Soccer Club**

### **Harassment, Abuse, and Bullying Policy**

#### **Policy Statement:**

It is the policy of the QC United Soccer Club (herein after referred to as “the Club”) that there shall be no harassment, abuse, or bullying, contact or non-contact of any player in any form of its programs. The Club and its Board of Directors expect every parent, volunteer, coach, and Board member to take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of its players and to protect them from any form of maltreatment.

#### **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. It is done to intimidate, coerce, fear, control, embarrass, or exclude.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional—being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and/or physically), sending hurtful texts; tormenting (hiding cleats/clothing, threatening gestures);
- Physical—pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, any use of violence;
- Racist—racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Sexual—unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- Homophobic—because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality; and/or
- Verbal—name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

Bullying may be:

- Planned or unintentional;
- Individual or group action(s); and/or
- Of an isolated or continual nature.

#### **Guidelines for Coaches:**

- Coaches have a duty and responsibility to establish and maintain an athletic environment free of harassment, abuse, and bullying of or between players;
- Coaches have a duty and responsibility to take seriously all incidents or complaints of harassment, abuse, and bullying; and
- Coaches will have the opportunity to pursue training and educational experiences that enhance coaches’ understanding of issues surrounding harassment, abuse, and bullying.

### **Recommended Action If You Are Bullied:**

1. You may try to deal with it yourself—but don't feel you have to. You will be supported.
  - a. Stay calm. *If this does not stop the bullying, persist.*
2. You may choose to confront the person.
  - a. Take a support person—i.e. a friend, a Board member, or an older player.  
*If this does not stop the bullying, persist.*
3. You may seek help—you will be supported.
  - a. Go to an association official, coach, parent, or another adult.
  - b. Tell the adult everything.
  - c. *Keep on telling until the bullying stops!*

### **Procedure:**

1. Report the bullying incident to the coach, manager, or appointed Board member(s).
2. Coach/adult needs to contact the appointed Board member(s).
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour.
7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue, the appointed Board member(s) will initiate disciplinary action.

### **Recommended Action For The Appointed Board Member(s):**

If the appointed Board member(s) decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails or is not appropriate, a small Panel (see Appendix A), made up of Board members or their designates, should meet with the parent(s) and child alleging bullying to get the details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity. (see Appendix C)
3. The same Panel should meet with the alleged bully and the parent(s) and present to them the incident raised, allowing them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should be taken.
4. The same Panel should also interview any witnesses to gather additional information. Minutes should be taken.
5. If bullying has, in the panel's view, taken place, the player(s) should be warned and put on notice of further action (see below). Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
6. All coaches involved with involved players should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process (i.e. the warning).

### **Consequences For Those Who Bully:**

Players found to be bullying teammates or members of other teams/clubs may face consequences, including but not limited to:

- Restitution for any damage to property or personal possessions;
- Temporary or permanent suspension; and/or
- Benching.

***Any retaliation by players or their parent(s) against someone who reports bullying, or any player/parent who falsely accuses another player/parent/coach/Board member will be dealt with very seriously.***

### **Appeals:**

Both the Complainant and the Respondent shall have the right to appeal the decision of the Panel. A notice of intention to appeal, along with the grounds for appeal, must be provided to the Club President within 72 hours of receiving the report. (see Appendix B)

Appeals may be made on the following grounds:

- A meeting was conducted in an unfair or biased manner;
- Panel members did not follow procedures as set out in this policy;
- Members of the Panel were unfair or biased;
- Panel members reached a decision which could not be supported by the evidence as provided in the investigation; and/or
- Panel members reached a decision which was grossly unfair or unreasonable.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Guidelines For The Panel:**

The Panel will convene as soon as possible, but not more than 15 business days after the Panel has been appointed. The Panel will govern the meetings as it deems appropriate, provided that:

- Members of the Panel shall select from among themselves a Chairperson;
- A quorum shall be all of the Panel members (minimum of 3 members);
- Decisions shall be by majority vote where the Chairperson carries a vote;
- Both the Complainant and the Respondent will be given the opportunity to make oral and written submissions to the Panel;
- The meetings shall be held in private;
- The parties shall be given 10 business days written notice of the day, time, and location of the meetings;
- The respondent shall receive a copy of the formal complaint; and
- The Complainant must be present at the hearing to respond when necessary and to answer questions the Panel may have. The Respondent has the choice whether or not to attend.

### **Decision:**

As soon as possible but within 10 business days of the conclusion of the meeting, the Panel will provide its written decision to the Club President or designate, with a copy provided to both the Complainant and the Respondent. The decision will contain:

- A summary of the relevant facts; and
- A determination as to whether the acts complained of constitute harassment, abuse, or bullying, as defined in the Policy.

If the Panel determines that the allegations of harassment, abuse, or bullying are false, vexatious, retaliatory, or frivolous, its report may direct that there be disciplinary sanctions against the complainant.

Unless otherwise decided, disciplinary sanctions directed by the Panel shall take effect immediately. The decision of the Panel will be final and binding upon the complainant, the respondent, and the QC United Soccer Club. Appeals to this process must be carried out according to the process outlined below.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Appeals:**

The appeal shall be heard by a Board, appointed by the Club President, which is comprised of:

- One representative of the QC United Soccer Club (who has not been previously involved);
- One representative of the Regina Soccer Association; and
- One outside individual not associated with the QC United Soccer Club.

The decision of the Appeal Board will be based on a review of the documentation regarding the complaint, including the statements of the Complainant and the Respondent, the reports from the meetings, the decision of the Panel, and the notice of appeal.

In deciding the appeal, the Appeal Board may uphold the decision of the Panel, reverse the decision of the Panel, and/or modify any of the Panel's recommendations for disciplinary action or remedial measures. The decision of the Appeal Board will be final and binding. A written response must be made within 10 business days from the date the decision is made.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Record Keeping:**

The Club President and the Club Secretary shall keep a secure record of the Panel's report and any appeal proceedings. The record shall contain all relevant documents, including but not limited to:

- A copy of the complaint or report;
- Responses to the complaint;
- Witness statements;
- Reports from meetings;
- Mediated solution (must be signed by both parties);
- Decision of the Panel;
- Sanctions imposed (if any);
- Any other related correspondence;
- Appeals (if any); and
- Decision of the Appeal Board (if any).

To the extent possible, the above documents and any documents resulting in a violation of the Harassment, Abuse, and Bullying Policy shall be held in confidence by the QC United Soccer Club. However, there may be circumstances where information may/must be shared, which include but not limited to:

- When criminal conduct may be involved;
- When it is believed necessary to protect others from harassment, abuse, or bullying;
- In the course of an investigation by a law enforcement agency;
- To protect the interests of the QC United Soccer Club; and/or
- When required by law.

It is important to note that the QC United Soccer Club will not allow or pursue retaliation of any kind for reports of complaints, or for assistance or information provided to applicable authorities in connection with an investigation of harassment, abuse, or bullying, where the reports or complaints are made or provided in good faith.