



SAMFA ANTI BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Statement of Intent:

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our SAMFA members, so they can participate in football with a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at SAMFA.

If bullying does occur, all SAMFA members should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **TELLING** organization. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the SAMFA executive.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person, and involves a person expressing their power through the humiliation of another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be in many different forms, such as, but not limited to the following:

- physical (hit/push/kick/punch or any violence towards a victim; take or damage physical property);
- verbal (name calling/insults including social attacks/taunting/teasing/homophobic or focusing on issue of sexuality);
- relational (try to cut off victims from social connection by convincing peers to exclude or reject a certain person/spreading rumours); and
- cyber bullying (abuse through any means of social media).

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Coaches, parents or youths who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

SAMFA has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to any issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy :

- All SAMFA members, coaches, volunteers and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All SAMFA members, coaches and volunteers should know what the SAMFA policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All players and parents should know what the SAMFA policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- SAMFA will take bullying seriously. Players and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- **Bullying will not be tolerated.**

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying.

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
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- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus / sports activities
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to be truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to any of the following: any member of the SAMFA executive, coach, team manager or an adult you can trust.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the current SAMFA President and a Vice President.
3. In serious cases parents will be informed and asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, **The RCMP will be consulted immediately.**
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying, must and will be investigated to ensure the bullying is stopped quickly.
6. Support will be offered to the victim.
7. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
8. If mediation fails and the bullying continues, SAMFA will **initiate disciplinary proceedings** according to the SAMFA Bylaws.

Recommended SAMFA Action

If SAMFA decides it is appropriate to deal with the situation internally, SAMFA will follow the procedures outlined below:

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/not appropriate a three person panel (made up from President and other board executives) should meet with the parent and child alleging the bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes to be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same 3 person panel should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them, to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes will again be taken and agreed by all as a true account.

4. If in the view of the panel bullying has taken place, the individual will be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.

5. In some cases the parent of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The SAMFA committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.

6. All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

Outcomes:

1. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Consequences may still be considered by the Panel.

2. If possible, the parties involved and the situation will be reconciled.

3. In serious cases, suspension or even removal from SAMFA , will be strongly considered and enforced.

4. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Prevention:

1. SAMFA has four written policies (Parents Code of Ethics; Coaches Code of Ethics; SAMFA Conflict and Dispute Resolution Protocol and Anti Bullying Policy) which include what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all SAMFA members.

2. All SAMFA members will sign to accept the written policies applicable to them.

3. SAMFA executive will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the organization, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.