



Approval & Version Control

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ST. THOMAS RINGETTE ASSOCIATION

HARASSMENT POLICY

1. Purpose:

St. Thomas Ringette Association is committed to providing an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect. Further, St. Thomas Ringette Association (STRA) supports equal opportunity and prohibits discriminatory practices.

Participants of the STRA, parents/guardians of STRA participants, and spectators at St. Thomas Ringette Association and Ringette Ontario events are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner consistent with the values of St. Thomas Ringette Association and Ringette Ontario.

Conduct that violates this Policy and/or the STRA Code of Conduct (STP-002) may be subject to sanctions pursuant to St. Thomas Ringette Association policies related to discipline and complaints.

2. Scope:

Everyone has a duty to report infractions. This is done by filing a written complaint to our Association, by writing to the President. The STRA will ensure a safe and positive environment for programs, activities and events by making all individuals aware that there is an expectation of appropriate behaviour, consistent with the values of St. Thomas Ringette Association, at all times.



3. Definitions & STRA Responsibilities:

The following terms have the following meanings in this Policy:

- 3.1 ***“Individuals”*** – refers to all categories of members and/or registrants defined in the St. Thomas Ringette Association Bylaws, as well as all individuals employed by, or engaged in activities with, the St. Thomas Ringette Association including, but not limited to, athletes, coaches, convenors, referees, officials, volunteers, managers, administrators, committee members, directors and officers of the St. Thomas Ringette Association.
- 3.2 ***“Harassment”*** - Harassment is defined as a comment or conduct (through any medium) directed towards an individual or group, which is offensive, abusive, racist, sexist, degrading or malicious. Harassment may occur between peers (eg: player to player in the same age group, parent to official, coach to coach) or between someone in a position of power of authority and an adult in a subordinate position (eg: coach to player, sports administrator to employee).
 - 3.2.1 Types of behaviour that constitute harassment include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) Written or verbal abuse, threats or outbursts;
 - (b) The display of visual material which is offensive or which one ought to know is offensive;
 - (c) Unwelcome remarks, jokes, comments, innuendos or taunts about a person’s looks, body, attire, age, race, religion, gender identity, sex or sexual orientation;
 - (d) Leering or other suggestive or obscene gestures;
 - (e) Condescending or patronizing behaviour, which is intended to undermine self-esteem, diminish performance or adversely affect working conditions;
 - (f) Practical jokes that cause awkwardness or embarrassment, endangers a person’s safety or negatively affect performance;
 - (g) Any form of hazing or bullying;
 - (h) Unwanted physical contact including touching, petting, pinching or kissing;
 - (i) Unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances, requests or invitations;
 - (j) Physical or sexual assault;
 - (k) Threats of retaliation against an individual who reports harassment.



- 3.2.2 STRA Responsibilities: All complaints of harassment, once received, shall be reviewed by the STRA President who will;
- (a) Chair and appoint a sub-committee comprised of 2 other STRA Executive board members (3 total members) who will review the complaint.
 - (i) The sub-committee must ensure their involvement does not pose a conflict of interest in a fair and unbiased evaluation of the complaint. Any STRA Executive appointed must notify the Chair and withdraw from the committee if a conflict of interest is present.
 - (ii) In the event the STRA President has a Conflict of Interest, the Chair of the sub-committee will fall to the STRA Vice President.
 - (b) Complete a timely and impartial investigation.
 - (c) Document and report all sub-committee findings to the STRA Executive Board and the Complainant(s), following the conclusion of the sub-committee's investigation.
- 3.2.3 The Subcommittee will investigate all complaints of harassment. Any deemed not to be frivolous or vexatious will be considered a Major infraction and shall be subject to the applicable investigation, hearing and / or sanctions (as per STP-002 Discipline & Complaints Policy).
- 3.3 **"Bullying"** - Bullying involves a person expressing their power through humiliation of another person. Bullying occurs between people at any age. It is inappropriate behaviour that is typically cruel, demeaning and hostile toward the bullying target. 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.
- 3.3.1 Bullying can be broken down into four types:
- (a) Physical – ex. Hit or kick victims; take/damage personal property.
 - (b) Verbal – ex. Name calling, insults; constant teasing.
 - (c) Social – ex. Try to cut off victims from social connection by convincing peers to exclude or reject a certain person.
 - (d) Cyber – ex. Use electronic sources including, but not limited to, Facebook, Snapchat, Tik Tok, Instagram texting, etc. to accomplish the bully's aims.



3.3.2 Types of behaviour that constitute bullying include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Unwarranted yelling and screaming directed at the target;
- (b) Continually criticizing the target's abilities;
- (c) Blaming the target for mistakes;
- (d) Making unreasonable demands related to performance;
- (e) Repeated insults or put downs of the target;
- (f) Repeated threats to remove or restrict opportunities or privileges;
- (g) Denying or discounting the target's accomplishment;
- (h) Threats of physical violence;
- (i) Actual physical violence.

3.3.3 STRA Responsibilities: All complaints of bullying, once received, shall be reviewed by the STRA President who will;

- (a) Chair and appoint a sub-committee comprised of 2 other STRA Executive board members (3 total members) who will review the complaint.
 - (i) The sub-committee must ensure their involvement does not pose a conflict of interest in a fair and unbiased evaluation of the complaint. Any STRA Executive appointed must notify the Chair and withdraw from the committee if a conflict of interest is present.
 - (ii) In the event the STRA President has a Conflict of Interest, the Chair of the sub-committee will fall to the STRA Vice President.
- (b) Complete a timely and impartial investigation.
- (c) Document and report all sub-committee findings to the STRA Executive Board and the Complainant(s), following the conclusion of the sub-committee's investigation.



3.4 “Hazing” refers to any activity expected of someone joining a group (or to maintain fully status in a group) that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person’s willingness to participate. Hazing is a broad terms encompassing any action or activity which does not contribute to the positive development of a person; which inflicts or intends to cause physical or mental harm or anxieties which may demean, degrade or disgrace any person regardless of location, intent, or consent of participants; any action or situation which intentionally or unintentionally endangers an athlete for admission into or affiliation with any team.

Any instance where an athlete is pressured by his or her teammates to participate in an activity with which the athlete is uncomfortable is considered to be an incidence of hazing.

3.4.1 Three categories of Hazing:

(a) Subtle – Actions that are against accepted and organizational standards of conduct, behaviour and good taste. An activity or attitude directed toward and athlete or an act which ridicules, humiliates, and/or embarrasses.

Ex. Deception, assigning demerits, implied threats, deprivation of privileges.

(b) Harassment – Anything that causes anguish or physical discomfort to an athlete, any activity directed toward an athlete which confuses, frustrates or causes undue stress.

Ex. Verbal abuse, threats, wearing embarrassing attire, sleep deprivation, sexual simulations.

(c) Violent – Any form of action that may cause physical punishment or any action that may cause bodily harm and/or touching in private places and/or de-clothing of any athlete.

Ex. Forced alcohol/drug consumption, beating/paddling or assault, branding, burning, public nudity, and/or bondage.

3.4.2 **STRA Responsibilities:** All complaints of hazing, once received, shall be reviewed by the STRA President who will;

(a) Chair and appoint a sub-committee comprised of 2 other STRA Executive board members (3 total members) who will review the complaint.



- (i) The sub-committee must ensure their involvement does not pose a conflict of interest in a fair and unbiased evaluation of the complaint. Any STRA Executive appointed must notify the Chair and withdraw from the committee if a conflict of interest is present.
- (ii) In the event the STRA President has a Conflict of Interest, the Chair of the sub-committee will fall to the STRA Vice President.
- (b) Complete a timely and impartial investigation.
- (c) Document and report all sub-committee findings to the STRA Executive Board and the Complainant(s), following the conclusion of the sub-committee's investigation.

4. Application of this Policy

- 4.1 This policy applies to individuals during the course of St. Thomas Ringette Association's business, activities and events, including but not limited to, competitions, practices, training camps, travel, and any meetings of committees or the Board of Directors.
- 4.2 This policy applies to conduct that may occur outside St. Thomas Ringette's business, activities and events when such conduct adversely affects relationships within St. Thomas Ringette Associations work and sport environment and is detrimental to the image and reputation of the St. Thomas Ringette Association.
- 4.3 Conduct arising within the business, activities and events of clubs or other organizations affiliated with St. Thomas Ringette Association will be dealt with using the polices and mechanisms of such organizations.