

Diversity & Inclusion / Anti-Bullying Policy

Whitecourt Minor Soccer Association

*Revised: May 10, 2026



1. Overview

The Whitecourt Minor Soccer Association (WMSA) believes that every individual has the fundamental right to participate in a safe, welcoming, and inclusive sporting environment. This policy outlines our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and establishes a clear framework for the prevention and elimination of bullying, harassment, and discrimination across all levels of our organization.

2. Purpose

The Whitecourt Minor Soccer Association (WMSA) is committed to developing and fostering a safe, inclusive, and diverse environment for all coaches, players, parents, and volunteers. We recognize and value individuals' unique life experiences, qualities, and characteristics. A diverse playing and coaching environment acknowledges and respects differences in race, age, gender, sexuality, disability, education, and background.

WMSA explicitly rejects bullying and discrimination of any kind. An inclusive culture embraces and respects these differences, ensuring that soccer truly is for everyone.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all registered teams, players, parents/guardians, coaches, staff, referees, volunteers, and spectators associated with WMSA.

4. Key Definitions

- **Diversity:** The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within an individual, group, or organization. This includes, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, and socio-economic background.
- **Inclusion:** The active, intentional, and ongoing practice of creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed, valued, respected, and empowered to fully participate.
- **Discrimination:** Any unfair, prejudicial, or inequitable treatment of individuals or groups based on personal characteristics.
- **Bullying:** When an individual or a group uses strength or power to hurt, either physically or emotionally, by intimidating or demeaning others. Bullying can be emotional, physical, verbal, or cyber-based. It is a conscious attempt to hurt, threaten, or frighten someone, and it is often persistent and covert.

- **Harassment:** Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against an individual that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Board of Directors

The Board is responsible for:

- Establish, review, and govern the policies relating to diversity, inclusion, and anti-bullying.
- Ensure the organization allocates the necessary resources to support inclusive programming.
- Act as the final governing body for severe disciplinary actions or escalated complaints regarding discrimination or bullying.

5.2 Executive Officers

- Operationalize this policy and ensure it is communicated to all members of the association.
- Oversee the formal complaint and reporting process, ensuring all investigations are handled promptly, confidentially, and fairly.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers are properly vetted and trained in WMSA's inclusion and protection standards.

5.3 Coaches & Coordinators

- Serve as frontline ambassadors for this policy, actively modeling inclusive, respectful, and positive behavior at all times.
- Actively monitor team dynamics for any signs of bullying, exclusion, or discrimination.
- Intervene immediately to stop any inappropriate behavior and report incidents to the WMSA Executive/Board as per the reporting procedures.
- Foster a team environment that aligns with the "Soccer for Life" methodology, ensuring all players have the opportunity to develop and love the game.

5.4 Volunteers (Managers, Event Staff, Committee Members)

- Support coaches and staff in maintaining a welcoming and safe environment.
- Refuse to tolerate, participate in, or ignore any instances of bullying or discrimination.
- Report any observed or reported incidents of misconduct to the appropriate Coach, Coordinator, or Board Member.

5.5 Players, Parents, Guardians, Spectators

- Treat all players, coaches, referees, and opposing teams with dignity and respect.

- Adhere to the WMSA Code of Conduct, ensuring that sidelines and digital spaces remain positive and free from harassment or abuse.
- Report any concerns regarding bullying or discrimination through the proper organizational channels.

6. Policy Guidelines & Zero Tolerance

WMSA is committed to providing an environment that champions diversity and inclusion. Participants, coaches, and volunteers will be respected and evaluated solely on their character, effort, and skills.

WMSA maintains a strictly enforced ZERO-TOLERANCE policy for any racism, harassment, or discrimination from any member toward anyone. As an organization, we are fully committed to eliminating discrimination at all levels of play and administration.

7. Pillars of Inclusion

- **Access:** Access encompasses both physical accommodations and organizational attitudes. WMSA will actively work to provide accessible opportunities for individuals of all abilities.
- **Attitude:** A positive attitude is the foundation of inclusion and often removes the biggest barriers to participation. WMSA expects all members to model behavior that makes inclusion a reality on and off the pitch.
- **Choice:** Participants and coaches should be provided with choices regarding where they want to play and who they wish to coach, within the structural guidelines of the association.
- **Opportunities:** Opportunities to advance, improve, and enjoy their sporting journey will be available equitably to all WMSA members, regardless of race, age, gender, sexuality, or physical ability.
- **Continuous Development:** WMSA is committed to the ongoing development of programs to ensure individuals of all abilities have the opportunity to play, develop, and foster a lifelong love of the game.

8. Partnerships & Accessibility

Financial barriers should not prevent participation. WMSA actively partners with organizations such as Jumpstart and KidSport to assist low-income families with registration fees, ensuring all children have the opportunity to play.

9. Anti-Bullying & Discrimination

Bullying occurs when an individual or a group uses strength or power to hurt, either physically or emotionally, by intimidating or demeaning others. Bullying can be emotional, physical, verbal, or cyber-based. It is a conscious attempt to hurt, threaten, or frighten someone, and it is often persistent and covert.

Reporting & Discipline:

- WMSA takes all complaints of bullying and discrimination from coaches, volunteers, players, referees, and spectators with the utmost seriousness.
- Staff, coaches, and volunteers are required to actively monitor for bullying behaviors and report any incidents to the WMSA Board immediately.
- Any member of WMSA found to have engaged in discriminatory or bullying behavior will be subject to the organization's formal discipline process.

10. Communication & Education

Communication is key to upholding these standards. WMSA staff, coaches, and volunteers will continuously educate themselves on best practices regarding diversity, inclusion, and the protection of youth athletes. All staff, coaches, and volunteers will be provided with a copy of this policy prior to the start of the season.

11. Policy Review & Authority

This policy is reviewed every two years or sooner if required. It takes effect upon approval by the WMSA Board of Directors.