



Hanover Minor Soccer Association

Anti-Bullying

Hanover Minor Soccer Association (HMSA) believes bullying of any kind is unacceptable. We have committed to creating the best soccer experience possible for every child in our programs. This includes providing a caring, friendly, safe and harassment free sport environment.

It is the responsibility of all staff, board members, coaches, referees, parents and volunteers to take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of HMSA players and to protect them from any form of bullying or maltreatment.

Bullying Policy

HMSA is committed to investigating reported incidents of bullying or harassment in a prompt, objective, and sensitive manner; taking necessary corrective action; and providing appropriate support for victims.

No individual shall be penalized in any way for making a complaint or giving evidence in a bullying or harassment investigation.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of physically or emotionally hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. It is done to intimidate, coerce, cause fear, control, embarrass or exclude.

Bullying can be, but is not limited to:

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

Bullying may be:

- Planned or unintentional
- Individual or group action(s)

Procedure When Bullying Occurs:

1. Any incident of bullying or harassment should be reported to either the team coach or manager as soon as possible.
2. The team coach and manager will discuss the situation and will investigate the incident speaking to both parties individually.
3. The team manager will inform parents of the players involved and may call a meeting to discuss the incident and make a plan to prevent future incidents from occurring.
4. The team manager will file an Incident Report Form with the HMSA Executive within 30 days of receiving the information that an incident has occurred.
5. The discipline chair will keep a record of all incident forms submitted.

6. If the measures taken to end the bullying are not effective and the bullying is seen to continue, a second report will be filed with the HMSA Executive.
7. Upon receipt of a second incident referral, the executive will make a ruling on possible intervention and/or disciplinary action.
8. If mediation and disciplinary action do not bring the bullying or harassing behavior to an end, the HMSA Executive may consider further disciplinary action or player expulsion from the Club.
9. In any situation where it is deemed necessary and appropriate by the HMSA, the police may be consulted regarding matters of bullying or harassment.

Recommended Actions:

If the HMSA executive decides it is appropriate to intervene after receipt of an incident report, following are some suggested measures that may be taken:

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails or is deemed as not appropriate, members of the Executive should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity.
3. The same 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 should again be taken.
4. The same panel should also interview any witnesses to gather additional information; again, minutes should be taken.
5. If bullying has in their view taken place the athletes should be warned and put on notice of further action. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
6. Coaches and managers involved with both athletes should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process (ex. the warning).

Consequences for Those Who Bully:

Athletes found to be bullying teammates or members of other teams/clubs may face consequences including:

- Formal apology
- Restitution for any damage to property or personal possessions
- Benching
- Barring from tournaments
- Suspension
- Expulsion from HMSA

Any retaliation by athletes or their parents against someone who reports bullying will be dealt with very seriously.

Appeals:

Both the Complainant and the Respondent shall have the right to appeal the decision of the HMSA Executive. 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 notice of decision.

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 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