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Description automatically generated **Walkerton Football Club**

**Zero Tolerance Policy**

Walkerton Football Club (WFC) supports zero tolerance for all forms of abuse. This means that verbal or physical abuse by or directed towards any member, player, coach, parent/guardian, spectator or staff will not be tolerated. This policy details the Club’s policy requirements regarding abuse, including reporting procedures.

**Scope:**

This policy applies to all members, players, coaches, parents/guardians, spectators and staff (collectively “stakeholders”) at WFC games, practices or events.

**The Club is committed to:**

1. Protecting all stakeholder from real or perceived abuse.

2. Investigating and acting on all complaints and reports of inappropriate behaviour.

3. Supporting the complainant through the complaint process and protecting the complainant from retribution.

4. Maintaining a Discipline Committee whose mandate is to investigate and act on any club-related discipline of players, coaches or other stakeholders.

5. Involving the police in any matter deemed to be potentially criminal in nature.

**Policy and Practice Requirements:**

* Any act of abuse/harassment should be reported immediately to the Club office by the victim and/or by those close to them (examples: a parent/guardian, a teammate, a coach) using the incident reporting form.
* All complaints of abuse/harassment will be immediately investigated by the Club.
* If the complaint is potentially criminal in nature, the Club will contact the police.
* The Club’s Discipline Committee will determine the consequence of the abuse. Penalties for contravention of this policy can range from permanent suspension from the Club, a temporary suspension from all Club activity for a defined period of time or a probationary period where the individual is allowed to continue to participate in Club activity but will be monitored for continued abusive behaviour. All Discipline Committee decisions are final.

**Handling of Incidents at a Club Game:**

When an official involved with the play feels that they are being harassed or abused verbally by a coach or spectator, they may cease actions on the field to deal with the situation.

If the source of harassment is:

* A coach: If the abuse comes from the coach of either team, the Official may dismiss the coach. The abuse may include, but is not limited to, offensive, insulting, or abusive language. The Official may also elect to issue a warning at the first offence and advise the coach that further behaviour will result in his/her expulsion or the game being abandoned.
* A spectator: If the source of abuse is a spectator, and the Official has provided them with a warning, the Official will advise the appropriate coach that the game may be abandoned if the harassment persists. If the abuse continues, the appropriate coach will provide the Official with the name of the spectator and the coach will ask the spectator to leave. If the individual is with neither team, the Coaches in partnership with the Official will ask the spectator to leave.

The game will only be resumed by the Official if the abuse ceases. In all cases, if the abuse persists or becomes physical, the Official will inform the coaches of both teams that the game is to be abandoned and state the source of the harassment. Should the game necessitate abandoning, coaches should be compliant with the Official.

The following details the Official’s reporting requirements:

a) Should the game continue without further incident, the Official will note that there was a brief stoppage during the game due to spectator/coach abuse. A small note will be made on the game sheet.

b) If the game was abandoned due to continuing abuse, or there is physical abuse, the Official should contact the appropriate authorities for their safety, as appropriate. If their safety is secure, the Official will report the incident to the club, detailing what happened and why the game was abandoned.

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