

Flagstaff Youth Hockey Association Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

The Flagstaff Youth Hockey Association (FYHA), is an active participant in the USA Hockey Association and conforms to all of its policies. FYHA is adopting its own anti-bullying policy as an additional measure of protection for its players. We consider bullying to be behavior ranging from verbal teasing to physical aggression. It is our position that no amount of bullying is acceptable. Not all joking or horseplay is bullying, but when the intent is to cause, or has the effect of causing, distress, the behavior will not be tolerated.

We (FYHA Board) are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all hockey participants so they can learn the game of hockey and the skills necessary to participate in the game in a fun, positive and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at any practice, game or other FYHA sanctioned event associated with our hockey program. If bullying is reported to any player or parent, they should immediately report the incident to their respective coach, manager, or any FYHA Board member who will ensure the complaint is investigated and dealt with promptly and effectively. We will promote a TELLING atmosphere. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is taking place is expected to report the incident, as indicated previously.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as conduct, gestures or comments which are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, malicious, degrading or otherwise offensive to a player, group of players and/or teammates, and which create a hostile or intimidating environment, or which negatively affects a player or player's performance. Bullying is harassment, intimidation by means of any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents that results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding or intentionally ignoring someone, spreading rumors or lies about someone
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, spitting or any use of violence against another or another's property
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures or other slurs
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic: remarks or focusing on the issue of sexuality or gender identity
- Verbal: Saying mean or hurtful things, threatening a player or players, sarcasm, teasing, taunting or tormenting

- Cyber/Online: Any bullying via the internet, including but not limited to, use of social networking sites to send email, text messaging, internet chat room dialogue, video and any other communication by use of computer or cell phone.

Signs and Symptoms of Potential Bullying

A child may indicate he or she is being bullied through various signs and symptoms. While some children are prone to report bullying to their parents, coaches or adults, others will not, due to fear, intimidation, or other factors. Coaches and parents should be aware of the following possible signs indicating that bullying may be taking place prompting them to investigate further and/or share their concerns with coaches or Association Board members:

If a child:

- is frightened or unwilling to attend practice
- doesn't care to associate with team members
- asks to be picked up promptly from practice
- changes their usual routine
- feigns illness prior to practice or game time
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stuttering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- begins to do poorly in schoolwork
- comes home with missing or damage equipment or clothing
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- 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

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

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 respect. Players must be discouraged from bullying and FYHA has the responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

All players, parents, coaches, managers and FYHA Board members should have a clear understanding of what bullying is. Coaches and Managers shall ensure that all

players and parents are provided a copy of the FYHA Anti-Bullying Policy and discuss the important points of the policy each year during the respective Parent/Coach or Parent/Manager Meeting. All players and parents should understand what they should do to report incidents involving bullying.

All coaches and Association Board members should be familiarized with the FYHA Anti-Bullying Policy each year and be made aware of the procedures to follow when bullying is reported.

As an Association, we take bullying seriously. Players and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported. Bullying will not be tolerated at any practices, games or other FYHA sanctioned events.

Player Education

Coaches are encouraged to discuss the problems of bullying openly with their players to promote a "Telling Atmosphere". Players should be encouraged to do the following to stop and discourage bullying tactics:

1. Players should tell their parents.
2. If a player is bullied at hockey practice/games, they should be encouraged to immediately tell a coach. Telling is not tattling and the player should be reassured that no consequences will result to them for coming forward. If necessary, players should write down what happened when it happened, and identify who bullied them.
3. If players are concerned or nervous about coming forward, they should be encouraged to talk with a friend or teammate.
4. All players should be encouraged to intervene in any active bullying situation.
5. Players should be encouraged to not fight back when confronted by a bully. They should calmly tell the player to stop, or say nothing, walk away and report the incident to a coach.

Procedures for Players, Parents, Coaches and Board Members

Players or parents should report suspected or alleged bullying using the FYHA Bullying Report Form. While the form allows for, and we accept, anonymous reports regarding incidents, we request that you provide us with your information so that proper follow-up can occur regarding the incident investigation. Lack of information will directly impact our ability to verify the reported incident.

In all cases of reported bullying, parents of the player who was bullied shall be informed as soon as possible and may be asked to meet with the respective team coach and/or coaching coordinator to discuss the incident. In all cases, strict confidentiality shall be maintained.

The bullying behavior will be investigated by the disciplinary committee, and the bullying stopped immediately. The parents of any player who is reported to be bullying will be

contacted as soon as possible by the respective team coach, coaching coordinator, or board member and asked to meet to discuss the incident. Depending on the severity of the situation, the parents may be asked to meet with representatives of the FYHA Board. If the incident is serious and it is appropriate, police may be consulted.

Consequences of Bullying

In all cases when a report of bullying has been substantiated, the wishes of the player and parents of the player being bullied will be considered before discipline is administered.

In a first offense situation, an attempt will be made to encourage the bully (bullies) to modify their behavior for their benefit, for the benefit of the person bullied and other team members. The bully (or bullies) will be asked to genuinely apologize to those players affected, including all team members. An attempt will be made by the coach, manager, or parent to reconcile the situation between the players (Age and level of maturity and or severity of offense must be considered).

In a second offense situation, the offender will lose the right to participate in the subsequent on ice session with their team (whether practice or game ice).

If a third offense is committed by the same offender, the bully will lose the right to participate in team activities for the next three on ice sessions (whether practices or games).

If the bullying persists to a fourth offense, disciplinary action against the offender will be taken by the team coach and/or FYHA Board which may include, but are not limited to, immediate suspension from participation in the hockey practice and game(s) for an extended period, or removal from the team or ban from the association. The Board reserves the right to suspend or otherwise discipline any player for bullying in addition to any action taken by the coach.

FYHA reserves the right to escalate discipline, regardless of which occurrence, to a second, third or fourth offense consequence depending on the seriousness of the incident and/or if the bully is uncooperative.

After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, the situation will continue to be monitored by the respective team coach and player parents to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.