



ASHA POLICY



Governance Disclaimer

This section provides a basic summary of the American Special Hockey Association's governance structure and key responsibilities. For complete information, including the full ASHA Bylaws, Board of Directors' policies, and organizational procedures, please contact us. The full governance documents are available upon request by emailing asha@specialhockey.org. We are committed to transparency and welcome inquiries from our members, partners, and stakeholders.

Need Help?? Contact us at ASHA@Specialhockey.org



ASHA AFFILIATE VOLUNTEER ROLES

Volunteers are the heart of ASHA. Whether on the ice, behind the bench, or supporting events, your commitment helps create safe, inclusive, and joyful experiences for every athlete and family. Each role is essential to the success of our programs, and we are deeply grateful for your time, energy, and care.

HEAD COACH

The Head Coach is responsible for overall team leadership. Duties include: Organizing practices and games; Leading player leveling and skill evaluation; Communicating directly with ASHA leadership; Ensuring compliance with ASHA safety policies and game guidelines. Head Coaches have full access to the ASHA Team Page for scheduling, registration review, and team-wide communication. Your leadership helps build not just better players—but better teammates and communities. Thank you for setting the tone.

TEAM MANAGER

The Team Manager oversees all administrative and logistical tasks. Responsibilities include: Managing player registration and roster documentation; Serving as the point of contact with ASHA for compliance matters; Coordinating event details, scheduling, and travel communication. Team Managers also have full access to the ASHA Team Page to support roster management and group communication. You keep the wheels turning so athletes can take the ice. Thank you for everything you do behind the scenes.

ASSISTANT COACH

Assistant Coaches support the Head Coach in running practices, assisting athletes, and ensuring safety and consistency on the ice. All Assistant Coaches must complete background screening and abuse prevention training. You're a key part of each athlete's experience. Thank you for stepping up, encouraging our players, and reinforcing positive team culture.

ON-ICE VOLUNTEER

On-Ice Volunteers assist with practices or C-level games by: Providing player support and encouragement; Helping with drills or positioning; Assisting from the bench or directly on the ice (at the discretion of the Head Coach). This role requires background screening and abuse prevention training. Your support brings stability, safety, and fun to the rink. We're grateful for the joy and encouragement you share with every athlete.

PARENT LOCKER ROOM SUPPORT

Parent volunteers may assist in locker rooms before or after practice or games, based on need and Head Coach discretion. This role: Must follow ASHA Locker Room Policy and MAAPP supervision rules; Requires background screening and abuse prevention training; Must never be in a one-on-one situation with a minor athlete. Thank you for helping create a safe and respectful space for every player to prepare and connect.

JUNIOR COACH/MENTOR*

Junior Coaches (Mentors) are youth volunteers who assist with C-level teams or practices. They must: Be 14–18 years old; Follow ASHA's game and supervision guidelines; Always work under adult supervision; Support athletes by modeling inclusion, encouragement, and patience.

Important Note: When A-level athletes assist as Jr. Coach/Mentors, they should not be dressed in full gear. Instead, they must wear a pinny, volunteer jersey, or clearly identifying apparel to distinguish themselves as support—not players. This helps maintain structure and safety for all participants. Thank you for being a positive role model and reminding us that leadership begins with kindness.

OFF-ICE VOLUNTEER

SPECIAL EVENT VOLUNTEER

These volunteers support the team by helping with: Social activities, community events, or fundraisers; Administrative help, such as handing out materials or managing check-in; Non-ice roles at tournaments or festivals. This role does not require background screening, but all volunteers are expected to follow ASHA's Code of Conduct and instructions from the coaching staff. Whether setting up tables or cheering from the bleachers—your presence means the world to our athletes.



*The terms "Jr. Coach" or "Mentor" refer to youth volunteers who provide peer-to-peer support for athletes. Many teams and affiliates may use different titles for these roles, but they all serve a similar purpose—supporting athletes in a positive, inclusive way.



ASHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ASHA is a national nonprofit that provides support, structure, and resources to our member programs. While each team operates independently, ASHA is here to offer guidance, oversight, and shared tools to help everyone succeed.

The American Special Hockey Association (ASHA) supports the growth and sustainability of sport of special hockey in the United States. We deliver specialized support and services to our member clubs so they may effectively provide exceptional hockey programming for individuals with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities. Our Association believes that special hockey is more than just a game, or simply time spent on the ice. Participation in special hockey provides unique opportunities for individuals to gain self-advocacy, build self-reliance & independence, increase concentration, expand capacity to work with others, and improve personal accountability.

ASHA advocates for the sport of special hockey to engage communities both inside and outside the arena with the game of hockey in a positive and meaningful manner. ASHA's purpose is to ensure that the any individual with an intellectual, developmental or physical disability, who wishes to play the game of hockey, has the opportunity to engage with the sport in a safe and inclusive manner. We accomplish this with advocacy, support and services to our member clubs.

BOARD STRUCTURE OVERVIEW

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- President: Leads board governance and works with the Executive Director to set direction.
- Vice President: Oversees special projects and board support.
- Secretary: Maintains records and meeting documentation.
- Treasurer: Oversees financial matters and compliance.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Volunteer board members oversee national programming and provide leadership in key areas:

- Community Initiatives
- Partnerships
- Tournaments & Events
- Finance & Fundraising
- Safety & Compliance
- Coaching Development
- Program & Stakeholder Engagement

ADVISORY & NON-VOTING ROLES

Subject matter experts in areas like special education, speech pathology, or regional development contribute valuable input without formal voting power.

STAFF (NON-VOTING)

ASHA's operations are provided by volunteer part-time and full-time staff to support day-to-day operations and member services.

- Executive Director: Reports directly to the Board of Directors and is responsible for the consistent achievement of ASHA's mission, operational execution, staff supervision, regulatory compliance, and financial stewardship. Serves as a non-voting member of the Executive Committee.
- Assistant Director: Reports to the Executive Director. Provides operational and administrative support to ensure continuity and execution of ASHA initiatives.
- Hockey Operations Director: Reports to the Executive Director. Provides operational, programmatic, and administrative support to ensure continuity and execution of ASHA initiatives.
- Additional Staff Roles (Non-Voting): Include Operations Director, Media Coordinator, National Registrar, and Warehouse Distribution. These roles support ASHA programs and events by ensuring compliance, communication, resource distribution, and logistical coordination.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The American Special Hockey Association (ASHA) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for every athlete, volunteer, coach, official, and family member. Participation in ASHA programs is a privilege, not a right, and that privilege comes with the responsibility to uphold the highest standards of behavior.

These Codes of Conduct reflect ASHA's core values of safety, inclusion, respect, and joy. Whether you are on the ice, behind the bench, in the stands, or supporting from the community, you are expected to follow these guidelines at all times.

These expectations are not just about rules, they're about protecting our athletes, honoring their growth, and building a positive, fair, and welcoming experience for all. These Codes will be enforced consistently, and violations may result in disciplinary action, including removal from practices, games, or the program.

TEAM MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

Team managers and administrators are leaders in our community. Your commitment to integrity, communication, and policy implementation sets the tone for the entire season. You are expected to:

- Follow all ASHA and affiliated organization policies.
- Ensure all athletes, staff, and volunteers are properly registered and compliant with required screenings and SafeSport training.
- Communicate clearly with families—including pre-season orientations and timely updates.
- Uphold ASHA's athlete leveling system and ensure roster accuracy.
- Recruit coaches and volunteers who reflect our values of inclusion and safety.
- Provide a place to play for all registered athletes and support leveled team formation.
- Enforce all locker room, supervision, and abuse prevention policies.
- Maintain transparency with all program finances, rosters, and athlete participation.
- Support education and continued learning opportunities for your team.
- Onboard new administrators to grow the program sustainably.

COACHES

Coaches are mentors, role models, and protectors of the game. You shape the athlete experience and hold the responsibility of building safe, developmentally appropriate practices. You are expected to:

- Prioritize athlete development and safety over competition or winning.
- Create inclusive, adaptive practices that meet the needs of all athletes.
- Enforce locker room and abuse prevention protocols without exception.
- Model respect, patience, and professionalism at all times.
- Communicate clearly with athletes and families.
- Place athletes according to ASHA's leveling guidelines.
- Give honest, encouraging feedback and support positive reinforcement.
- Never engage in therapeutic behavior unless licensed to do so.
- Maintain professional boundaries in all interactions.
- Attend clinics or trainings when available and required.



CODE OF CONDUCT

PARENTS & GUARDIANS

Parents and guardians are essential partners in the success of every athlete and the tone of our team.

You are expected to:

- Prioritize your athlete's enjoyment, effort, and progress over outcomes.
- Remain present at events or assign a responsible adult to attend in your place.
- Support your team's decisions and policies with positivity and trust.
- Address concerns respectfully and privately with team staff.
- Avoid disruptive behavior at games or practices.
- Celebrate all athlete's efforts and milestones.
- Comply with locker room and supervision policies.
- Support fair and honest athlete leveling.
- Learn about special hockey and participate in your team's volunteer culture.
- Encourage officials, coaches, and all volunteers.

ATHLETES

Every athlete helps create a positive, safe, and inclusive team culture. All athletes are expected to try their best, respect others, and enjoy the game. You are expected to:

- Show up on time and ready to participate.
- Treat teammates, coaches, and opponents with kindness and respect.
- Follow rules and listen to coaches.
- Celebrate your progress and support others.
- Trust coaches to place you on the team that's right for you.
- Play safely and have fun.

ON-ICE OFFICIALS

Officials are responsible for ensuring safe, fair play. You are not just enforcing rules—you're shaping the game's tone and accessibility. You are expected to:

- Know and apply ASHA rules consistently and fairly.
- Communicate respectfully with coaches and athletes.
- Intervene in unsafe or abusive behavior.
- Remain professional, calm, and composed.
- Follow all ASHA procedures for special hockey.
- Support appropriate athlete leveling and game balance.

SPECTATORS

Spectators are an active part of our team culture. Your energy should reflect the joy, pride, and sportsmanship that define ASHA. You are expected to:

- Cheer for effort, not just results.
- Refrain from yelling at athletes, referees, or coaches.
- Avoid leaning on the glass or interfering with play.
- Use positive language and remain encouraging—especially during tough moments.
- Respect all athletes, teams, officials, and fellow spectators.
- Understand that spectators attend as guests. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior may result in removal.



ASHA Locker Room Policy

Updated for 2025–2026 Season

Safe Sport Act & MAAPP Compliant Statement of Responsibility

Every ASHA Affiliate Member is responsible for developing and enforcing a Locker Room Policy that is compliant with the Safe Sport Act and the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP). The following policy is provided to help ASHA teams meet federal compliance standards while addressing the unique needs of Special Hockey athletes. ASHA continues to work directly with the U.S. Center for SafeSport to advocate for reasonable accommodations that reflect the developmental and physical needs of our participants.

ASHA VALUES

ASHA understands that the camaraderie and friendships our athletes form in the locker room are central to their experience. These guidelines are not intended to diminish that connection—but to ensure safety, privacy, and legal compliance across all member programs.

BASE LAYER REQUIREMENTS

All athletes, coaches, and volunteers must arrive at the rink wearing their base layers or shorts and t-shirts under their street clothes. No one may change to or from a state of undress in the locker room. Base layers should be clean, intact, and provide adequate coverage. Any changes must occur in a private, non-shared bathroom or family dressing area.

GENDER-APPROPRIATE AND ACCESSIBLE SPACES

Locker rooms must be designated by gender or use staggered access if separate spaces are not available. Coaches and monitors present inside locker rooms must match the gender designation of the locker room. If accommodations are needed, consult with your head coach to make appropriate arrangements. If an athlete requires support dressing or undressing and cannot be left alone, that athlete must be accompanied by their parent or legal guardian in a designated Family Dressing Area. Athletes may not be left unattended or be dressed by unrelated adults. If your facility cannot meet these needs, alternative plans must be made in advance.

MONITORING & SUPERVISION

Locker room access should be limited to registered ASHA members who are compliant with current background check and abuse prevention training regulations. Each team must have two compliant adults present during all periods of locker room use. If not inside the room, one screened adult must monitor just outside with the door open (as long as privacy is still preserved). Prior to each use, locker rooms should be inspected by a coach or SafeSport-screened volunteer. Locker rooms must be locked or secured while the team is on the ice.

USE OF CELL PHONES & RECORDING DEVICES

Cell phones and all recording-capable devices are strictly prohibited inside locker rooms. If a phone is needed, it must be used outside the locker room.

ADULT ACCESS & CREDENTIALS

No adult is permitted in the locker room or on the bench without an active ASHA membership, valid abuse prevention training, and background screening.

Parents/guardians may only enter locker rooms:

- At the specific request of the head coach
- If registered with ASHA as a Locker Room Coach
- With a current and verified Background Screening and Abuse Prevention Training.



INCLUSIVE PRACTICE FOR MIXED-GENDER & MIXED-NEEDS TEAMS

ASHA teams often include male and female athletes as well as individuals with various personal care and privacy needs. Wherever possible:

- Use separate locker rooms for male and female athletes
- Allow for flexible arrival/departure times to accommodate staggered dressing
- Provide a private or family-friendly changing space when needed
- Convene as a team in a neutral space once dressed (for pre-game talk or meetings)

If separate rooms are unavailable, staggered access should be used. No athlete should ever be made to feel uncomfortable or exposed.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Athletes requiring mobility assistance, behavioral supports, or specific care routines should have a pre-arranged plan developed by their team leadership and family. ASHA encourages programs to create “Skate Tying Areas” outside the locker room to reduce unnecessary locker room access.

REQUIRED TRAINING & SCREENING

All adults with access to youth athletes must:

- Complete a criminal background screening every 2 years
- Complete Core Abuse Prevention Training every 2 years
- Be listed on file with ASHA as cleared for locker room or bench access

No exceptions will be made for compliance.

ABUSE PREVENTION & REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

All forms of misconduct are strictly prohibited: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, harassment, hazing, grooming, and any behavior violating SafeSport policy.

Anyone who becomes aware of or suspects misconduct must report it within 24 hours to:

- Local law enforcement (if applicable)
- ASHA@specialhockey.org
- U.S. Center for SafeSport (when appropriate)

Staff and volunteers are protected by law when reporting in good faith.

RECOGNIZING GROOMING & RED FLAGS

All ASHA members should be aware of grooming behaviors, including but not limited to: isolating athletes, excessive gift-giving, boundary-pushing physical contact, overuse of private electronic communication, or exposure to sexualized content. If these behaviors are observed, they must be addressed immediately through appropriate channels.

ENFORCEMENT

Failure to adhere to ASHA’s Locker Room Policy may result in:

- Immediate removal of access privileges
- Temporary or permanent suspension from team activities
- Legal reporting to state or federal agencies where required

FINAL NOTES

ASHA believes that locker rooms should be a space where athletes feel safe, supported, and respected. We remain committed to balancing the developmental needs of our athletes with our legal and ethical responsibilities. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping Special Hockey a safe space for all.



POLICIES AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION SUMMARY

HARRASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION & ZERO TOLERANCE

The American Special Hockey Association (ASHA) maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy for any form of misconduct. Every person deserves to feel safe, respected, and welcomed.

- Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:
 - Harassment, bullying, or intimidation
 - Discrimination based on race, gender, identity, ability, or religion
 - Retaliation or exclusion
 - Sexual misconduct or inappropriate contact

ASHA'S I.D.E.A. ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY

- Clearly defines the behavioral standards expected of all participants and reinforces our unwavering commitment to inclusion, dignity, equity, and accountability.
- All reports of misconduct will be taken seriously and investigated promptly, thoroughly, and confidentially in alignment with local affiliate policies, the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policy (MAAPP), and all applicable legal requirements.

COMPLAINTS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Concerns related to safety, program integrity, or violations of ASHA policy must first be reported to the local affiliate program or appropriate authorities. All reports should be addressed promptly, with care, discretion, and confidentiality at the local level.
- ASHA strongly believes that conflicts are best resolved within each affiliate's own structure and leadership. Volunteers and families are expected to handle minor personal disagreements in a respectful and constructive manner without escalating unnecessarily.
- ASHA does not oversee day-to-day operations of individual teams and will only review complaints after the local affiliate has made documented, good-faith efforts to resolve the issue internally and submits a formal appeal. Misusing the complaint process to escalate interpersonal conflicts, avoid local accountability, or bypass reasonable dialogue may result in suspension or termination of ASHA membership.

REPORTING

- Any violations of the ASHA Code of Conduct or Locker Room Policy by a player or coach must be reported to the local program within 24 hours of the incident. These reports must be documented and addressed in compliance with the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP) and the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code.
- The ASHA Board of Directors reserves the right to review the eligibility of any coach or player with a documented history of violent, disruptive, or unsafe behavior, whether on or off the ice.
- Questions regarding ASHA rules or conduct policies should first be directed to the local affiliate member. If not resolved at the local level, the matter may be elevated to ASHA for review. ASHA may also be consulted for national-level guidance or clarification when appropriate.
- All ASHA participants are subject to the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code, MAAPP, and related regulatory standards. All individuals are expected to uphold ASHA's mission, values, and policies and understand that misconduct may carry serious consequences, including suspension or removal from participation.

MANDATORY ABUSE REPORTING

Concerns involving suspected abuse, neglect, or harm—whether on or off the ice—must be reported immediately. This obligation applies regardless of the reporting party's membership status with ASHA.

Reports should be directed to:

- The U.S. Center for SafeSport: www.safesport.org | 833-5US-SAFE
- Local law enforcement or child protective services, as required by law
- The Local Affiliate Member, who must also contact ASHA's designated SafeSport representative for national-level guidance

**Failure to report suspected abuse may result in sanctions or disciplinary action.
ASHA complies fully with all SafeSport regulations and mandatory reporting laws.**



ASHA CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY AND CONDUCT REVIEW PROCESS



The American Special Hockey Association (ASHA) is committed to ensuring a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all athletes, volunteers, and staff. We recognize that conflicts may occur and believe that respectful resolution strengthens our teams and communities.

All ASHA participants are subject to the U.S. Center for SafeSport Code, Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP), and ASHA's Codes of Conduct. Misconduct or ongoing conflict may carry serious consequences, including suspension or removal from participation.

GOOD FAITH REPORTING REQUIREMENT

All concerns and complaints must be submitted in good faith—based on sincere belief, genuine concern, or firsthand knowledge.

ASHA considers knowingly filing false, misleading, or retaliatory complaints to be a form of harassment and a violation of ASHA's Code of Conduct. Complaints submitted in bad faith, or with the intent to discredit or retaliate against another individual, may result in disciplinary consequences.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Confidentiality and neutrality must be upheld throughout the process.
- All parties must be treated respectfully and fairly, with efforts to resolve issues as quickly and constructively as possible.
- Conflict resolution efforts must not delay the mandatory reporting of abuse or safety concerns.
- ASHA believes it is the responsibility of the local ASHA Member Club or Affiliate to attempt to resolve all conflicts in an unbiased and positive manner.
- In cases where local resolution is not possible, Member Clubs must maintain clear documentation of the process, including all reasonable efforts made to resolve the issue amicably.
- This conflict resolution process is not to be used for personal grievances or interpersonal disagreements unrelated to ASHA policy. All actions and outcomes must align with stated policies and procedures.
- Member Clubs are expected to act promptly, fairly, and transparently, maintaining the integrity of ASHA's mission and values.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROTOCOL REQUIRED STEPS

To ensure consistency and accountability, ASHA Member Clubs must follow these steps when addressing conduct concerns or interpersonal conflict:

1. Identify and Document the Conflict

- a. A concern or complaint is raised by a participant, coach, volunteer, or parent. The local ASHA Member Club must document the issue within 24 hours.

2. Initial Determination at the Local Level

- a. The ASHA Member Club reviews the concern to determine:
 - Can the matter be addressed informally through direct communication or restorative conversation?
 - Does the concern involve a potential violation of ASHA policy?

b. Mandatory Reporting if Abuse Is Suspected

- If abuse, harassment, or any reportable misconduct is suspected:
 - The local Member Club must immediately report the concern to the U.S. Center for SafeSport and/or local law enforcement, as appropriate.
 - ASHA must be notified for recordkeeping and guidance.
- Clubs must follow any SafeSport directives related to ongoing investigations or interim measures.

3. Determine the Resolution Process

a. Restorative Process (when appropriate)

- i. Parties may engage in a restorative conversation or mediation to resolve interpersonal disputes when no policy violation is suspected.

b. Internal Review and Action

- i. The ASHA Member Club conducts a good faith review, ensures that all parties have an opportunity to be heard, and reaches a resolution aligned with ASHA policies and the SafeSport Code.

4. Notification of Resolution

- a. A resolution must be documented and communicated to the parties involved. This may include corrective measures, mediation outcomes, education, or disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances.

5. Appeal to ASHA Disciplinary Committee

- a. If a participant believes the resolution was reached in error or without due process, they may submit an appeal to the ASHA Disciplinary Committee.
 - The Committee will review the rationale of the local decision to determine whether ASHA policy was followed.
- Should the Committee determine that violations of ASHA policy occurred, the Committee may impose consequences up to and including suspension or removal from participation in ASHA programs and events.

American Special Hockey Association

Action Plan and Zero Tolerance Policies on Harassment, Discrimination & Bullying

Coach/Volunteer/Athlete Responsibilities

IF YOU HAVE experienced or observed ableism, hate, racism, sexism, anti-semitism, homophobia, bullying, or harassment in any form*, it is the responsibility of your Head Coach (or Board Member) to gather as many facts as possible, which includes time of the incident, location, witnesses, and other related pieces of information that are needed to determine the next course of action. Depending upon the seriousness of the incident, your Head Coach (or Board Member), in close collaboration with the officers of your ASHA Member Club Board of Directors, will also determine if local law enforcement support is needed. Once an ASHA Member Club investigation is concluded, a number of actions can occur:

- The volunteer or athlete, who exhibited bullying or harassing behavior (policies are attached) can receive a range of disciplinary consequences including suspension or expulsion from all ASHA Programs.
- A restorative justice conversation amongst the volunteers or athletes involved will be utilized as a means to restore relationships and that is only if all parties involved are willing and want to participate in a restorative process. In some cases a restorative justice (RJ) conversation is not the appropriate option.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are always contacted and included in determining how to respond to a volunteer or athlete when they are either the victim or the individual making choices that is harming others.
- ASHA Member Club Heads Coaches work in very close collaboration with the American Special Hockey Association, and can provide resources to provide social and emotional support to volunteers and athletes.

ASHA works closely with our ASHA Member Clubs on any incidents of hate and will take serious action to hold our volunteers and athletes accountable. We believe every member of our organization is capable of treating one another with compassion and kindness.

A zero tolerance policy means that we will not tolerate hate in any form within the American Special Hockey Association or at any of our sanctioned events. Your responsibility, volunteers and athletes, is to follow the reporting expectations as noted above. What would be most expedient, is that you confidentially report directly to your ASHA Member Club Head Coach. If you are not comfortable with speaking to your ASHA Member Club Head Coach, please tell a Board Member of your ASHA Member Club and that adult will inform your Head Coach or ASHA Regional Director/ASHA Executive Director who will need to speak with you.

American Special Hockey Association Zero Tolerance for Harassment, Discrimination & Retaliation Policy

Federal law and state law, specific to the Civil Rights Act of 1972, prohibits discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, including, but not limited to: race, color, sex, sexual orientation or preference, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, creed, citizenship status, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, medical conditions including, but not limited to genetic characteristics, intellectual or physical disability, and veteran status.

The American Special Hockey Association (ASHA) is concerned about the safety and well-being of volunteers and athletes, and is committed to providing an environment that is free from harassment, discrimination and retaliation on the basis of these protected characteristics, and any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law, ordinance or regulation.

ASHA is committed to eliminating racism and other forms of discrimination, retaliation, and harassment throughout our organizations and our membership. It is our policy that harassment, ableism, racism, homophobia and discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes all form of hate speech/language and derogatory slurs/language and exclusion of the use of safe and approved adaptive techniques and equipment in adaptive hockey programming.

To this end, ASHA strictly prohibits any and all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment (including the use of hate speech/language, sexual harassment and sexual violence), discrimination or retaliation in any form. Anyone who violates this policy of zero tolerance is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination or dismissal.

Zero Tolerance

The American Special Hockey Association strictly prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment (including the use of hate speech/language, sexual harassment and sexual violence), discrimination, the use of hate speech* or retaliation in any form. Anyone who violates this policy of zero tolerance is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination or dismissal.

Hate Speech/Language

Hate speech/language is any use of slurs or derogatory terms or language which includes (but not limited to) hurtful or negative references about: intellectual or physical disability, race, color, sex, sexual orientation or preference, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, creed, citizenship status, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, medical conditions including, but not limited to genetic characteristics, and veteran status.

Unlawful Discrimination Defined

Unlawful discrimination occurs when an individual's protected characteristic is used as a basis for adverse decisions affecting that individual. Prohibited discrimination includes, but is not limited to racism of any kind, sexual harassment and sexual violence. Discrimination encompasses a wide range of conduct.

Examples of specifically prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Terminating an individual's participation based on a protected characteristic;
- Refusing a request based on a protected characteristic;
- Denying participation based on a protected characteristic.



Unlawful Harassment Defined

Unlawful harassment includes all forms of unwelcome verbal, physical and visual conduct and displays that are based on any of the above mentioned protected characteristics and which interfere with performance and/or create an offensive or hostile environment. Harassment can take many forms. The following are some examples that may constitute harassment:

- (a) Verbal harassment such as jokes, epithets, slurs and unwelcome remarks about an individual's race, color, ethnicity, ability or any of the protected characteristics as described above. Including body, dress, clothing, physical appearance or abilities, derogatory comments, discussions of a sexual nature and/or harassing remarks;
- (b) Physical harassment such as physical interference with normal activity, impeding or blocking movement, assault, unwelcome physical contact or touching, staring at a person's body, and threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to a protected characteristic; and
- (c) Visual harassment such as offensive or obscene e-mails, instant messaging, web blogs, photographs, calendars, posters, cards, cartoons, drawings and gestures, displays with sexually suggestive or lewd objects, unwelcome letters or notes or any other graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of the individual's protected characteristics.
 - The conduct can occur in any program or activity and can take place in or around ice rinks, or other gathering places.
 - The conduct can occur virtually through any internet communications.

Sexual Harassment Defined

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (1) submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of participation in sports or Club activity;
- (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for participation decisions affecting the individual; or
- (3) such conduct has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a volunteer or athlete's right to participate in an environment free from discrimination, unreasonably interfering with a volunteer or athlete's participation, and creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, educational, or living environment. Sexual harassment also includes sexual violence, which, in addition to violating this zero tolerance policy, is a crime.

Sexual harassment, including sexual violence, encompasses a wide range of conduct. Examples of specifically prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Promising, directly or indirectly, a volunteer or athlete a reward, if the volunteer or athlete complies with a sexually oriented request;
- Threatening, directly or indirectly, retaliation against a volunteer or athlete if the volunteer or athlete refuses to comply with a sexually oriented request;
- Denying, directly or indirectly, a volunteer or athlete's opportunity to participate, if the volunteer or athlete to comply with a sexually oriented request;
- Engaging in sexually suggestive conversation or physical contact or touching a volunteer or athlete;
- Displaying pornographic or sexually oriented materials; Telling sexual or "dirty" jokes; Engaging

American Special Hockey Association Zero Tolerance for Policy for Bullying & Bully Prevention

The American Special Hockey Association (ASHA) believes that all volunteers/athletes have a right to a safe and healthy environment. ASHA Member Clubs have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

ASHA and ASHA Member Clubs will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any volunteer/athlete. ASHA Members (Staff, Volunteers or Athletes) shall not intimidate, harass, or bully another member through words or actions. Such behavior includes: use of hate speech, or demeaning language, direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation.

ASHA expects volunteers/athletes and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to their local ASHA Member Club Leadership or ASHA Regional/Executive Director. Any Coach or volunteer who witness such acts take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to volunteers/athletes during ASHA sanctioned activities.

To ensure bullying does not occur during ASHA activities, ASHA will cultivate acceptance and understanding in all volunteers/athletes and staff to build ASHA's capacity to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment

ASHA Head Coaches should discuss this policy with their volunteers/athletes in cognitive and age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Volunteers/athletes who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from ASHA.

Each ASHA Member Club will adopt a Coach/Volunteer/Athlete Code of Conduct to be followed by every ASHA Member.

The Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Any volunteer/athlete who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Volunteers/athletes are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the ASHA Member Club Head Coach or designee.
- Volunteers/athletes can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.
- If the complainant volunteer/athlete or the parent of the volunteer/athlete feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the volunteer/athlete or the parent/guardian of the volunteer/athlete should contact the ASHA Regional Director/Executive Director. ASHA strictly prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, volunteers/athletes and their parents/guardians will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting intimidation and bullying: at the beginning of the hockey season, as part of the volunteer/athlete handbook and/or information packet, as part of new volunteer/athlete orientation, and as part of the ASHA Member Club's notification to parents/guardians.
- All ASHA Member Clubs will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of investigation confidential.
- ASHA Member Coaching Staff and Volunteers who witness acts of bullying shall take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. People witnessing or experiencing bullying are strongly encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the target or witnesses in any way.

