



# TRAILS WEST HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

## Trails West Policy on the Prevention of Harassment, Bullying and Abuse

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### **I. Introduction**

This document sets out the principles and practices of Trails West with regards to abusive behavior, harassment, and bullying towards participants. The principles and policies are based on similar principles and policies adopted by Hockey Canada.

### **II. Recognition and Prevention of Abuse Policy**

#### **A. RELATIONSHIP TO HARASSMENT/ BULLYING POLICY**

Some behaviours which are defined as abuse, when a child or youth's protection is at risk, can also constitute harassment or bullying, when the behaviour breaches human rights or appropriate relationship/conduct boundaries. Trails West's Harassment/Bullying Policy covers such behaviours. Together, the two policies address the entire spectrum of abusive, bullying and harassing behaviours.

#### **C. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Like Hockey Canada, Trails West is committed to seeking better ways to keep our youth safe. Protecting participants from all forms of abuse and neglect, whether emotional, physical or sexual, is an important element of safety. Trails West considers any form of abuse or neglect to be unacceptable and will do all it can to prevent this intolerable social problem. To this end, Trails West will promote awareness of all forms of abuse and neglect by providing educational materials and programs for participants, parents, and volunteers. Through the use of these strategies, Trails West will send a clear message to all potential abusers and sexual predators that hockey participants are not easy targets. Trails West is committed to the highest possible standards of care for its participants.

#### **D. POLICY**

It is the policy of Trails West that there shall be no abuse and neglect, whether physical, emotional or sexual of any participant in any of its programs. Trails West expects every parent and volunteer to take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of its participants and protect them from any form of maltreatment.

#### **1. DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE**

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional and/or sexual mistreatment or lack of care which causes physical injury or emotional damage to a child. A common characteristic of all forms of abuse against children and youth is an abuse of power or authority and/or breach of trust.

*For complete information, consult Hockey Canada's "Speak Out! Act Now! A Guide for preventing and responding to Abuse and Harassment for Sports Clubs and Associations", pp. 52-79*

## 2. EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is a chronic attack on a child's self-esteem; it is psychologically destructive behaviour by a person in a position of power, authority or trust. It can take the form of name-calling, threatening, ridiculing, berating, intimidating, isolating, hazing or ignoring the child's needs.

## 3. PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse is when a person in a position of power or trust purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or youth. This may take the form of slapping, hitting, shaking, kicking, pulling hair or ears, throwing, shoving, grabbing, hazing or excessive exercise as a form of punishment.

## 4. NEGLECT

Neglect is chronic inattention to the basic necessities of life such as clothing, shelter, nutritious diets, education, good hygiene, supervision, medical and dental care, adequate rest, safe environment, moral guidance and discipline, exercise and fresh air. This may occur in hockey when injuries are not adequately treated or players are made to play with injuries, equipment is inadequate or unsafe, no-one intervenes when team members are persistently harassing another player, or road trips are not properly supervised.

## 5. SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse is when a young person is used by an older child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification. There are two categories:

<b>CONTACT</b>	<b>NON-CONTACT</b>
touched or fondled in sexual areas	obscene remarks on phone/computer or in notes
forced to touch another person's sexual areas	voyeurism
kissed or held in a sexual manner	shown pornography
forced to perform oral sex	forced to watch sexual acts
vaginal or anal intercourse	sexually intrusive questions and comments
vaginal or anal penetration with an object or finger	forced to pose for sexual photographs, videos or webcams
sexually oriented hazing	forced to self-masturbate or forced to watch others masturbate

## 6. DUTY TO REPORT

Abuse and neglect are community problems requiring urgent attention. Trails West is committed to help reduce and prevent the abuse and neglect of participants. Trails West realizes that persons working closely with children and youth have a special awareness of abusive situations. Therefore these people have a particular reporting responsibility to ensure the safety of Canada's young, by knowing their provincial protection acts and following through as required.

Alberta has mandatory reporting laws regarding the abuse and neglect of children and youth. Consequently, it is the policy of Trails West that every parent or volunteer who has reasonable grounds to suspect that a participant is or may be suffering or may have suffered from emotional, physical abuse and neglect and/or sexual abuse shall immediately report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to the local child protection agency and/or the local police detachment. Alberta' Human Services website <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/> provides further resources in this regard. Failure to report an

offence and thereby failure to provide safety for participants may render the adult who keeps silent legally liable for conviction under the provincial child protection acts.

### **III. Bullying and Harassment Policy**

This Policy sets out the principles and practices of Trails West regarding bullying and harassment.

#### **A. RELATIONSHIP TO RECOGNITION AND PREVENTION OF ABUSE POLICY**

Some behaviours which are defined as harassment or bullying, when the behaviour breaches human rights or appropriate relationship/conduct boundaries, can also constitute abuse, when a child or youth's protection is at risk. Trails West's Recognition and Prevention of Abuse Policy covers such behaviours. Together, the two policies address the entire spectrum of abusive, bullying and harassing behaviours.

#### **B. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Trails West is committed to providing an environment which prohibits discriminatory practices and bullying.

Harassment is a form of discrimination which is prohibited by human rights legislation in Canada. Bullying involves a person expressing their power through the humiliation of another person. Bullying may be a form of harassment but also has some of its own defining characteristics. The sport setting is one setting in which bullying occurs. In some cases coaches and players use bullying tactics deliberately to motivate performance and to weaken opponents.

Trails West supports the right of all its members, whether athletes, volunteers or parents, to participate in all Trails West activities free from any form of harassment and bullying. Further, Trails West emphasizes the importance of eliminating harassment and bullying in hockey as a key element in ensuring the safety of young participants. A sports environment which actively discourages harassment and bullying and builds relationships based on trust and mutual respect is an environment which discourages the abuse of children and youth, and encourages the overall development of individuals.

In order to further these objectives, Trails West will make every reasonable effort to promote awareness of harassment and bullying among all its members, and to respond quickly and effectively to complaints or disclosures of harassment or bullying.

#### **C. POLICY**

It is the policy of Trails West that harassment and bullying in all its forms will not be tolerated during the course of any Trails West activity or program. Accordingly, each Trails West parent and volunteer is responsible for making every reasonable effort to uphold this commitment. Specifically, this includes refraining from harassing or bullying behaviour, responding promptly and informally to minor incidents of harassment or bullying and following guidelines for reporting or responding to more serious complaints of harassment or bullying. Players and other participants are expected to refrain from harassing or bullying behaviour and are encouraged to report incidents of harassment or bullying.

#### **1. DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT**

Harassment is defined as conduct, gestures or comments which are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, malicious, degrading or otherwise offensive to an individual or group of individuals, and which create a hostile or intimidating environment for work or sports activities, or which negatively affect performance or work conditions. Any of the different forms of harassment must be based on the grounds  
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prohibited in human rights legislation, such as race, ethnicity, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability, pardoned conviction and sexual orientation. Harassment may occur among anyone between peers (e.g.: player to player of the same age group, parent to official, coach to coach) or between someone in a position of power or authority and an adult in a subordinate position (e.g.: coach to player).

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of harassment:

1. unwelcome jokes, innuendo or teasing about a person's body, looks, race, sexual orientation etc.
2. condescending, patronizing, threatening or punishing actions which undermine self-esteem
3. practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, or may endanger a person's safety
4. degrading or inappropriate hazing rituals
5. unwanted or unnecessary physical contact including touching, patting, pinching
6. unwanted conduct, comments, gestures or invitations of a sexual nature which are likely to cause offence or humiliation, or which might on reasonable grounds be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on employment or on any opportunity for training or advancement
7. sexual assault or physical assault

It is important to note that the behaviours described in items 5 to 7, when directed towards a child or youth, constitute abuse under child protection legislation. This may also be true of other behaviours, for example, certain hazing practices. In such cases, the duty to report provisions of the Recognition and Prevention of Abuse Policy are applicable.

## **2. DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

Bullying involves a person expressing their power through the humiliation of another person. Bullying occurs between people at any age and is not addressed under human rights legislation. It is inappropriate behaviours that are typically cruel, demeaning and hostile toward the bullying targets. Most commonly occurs between children under the age of twelve but may also constitute behaviours between youth or between adults. Bullying is similar to harassment but the behaviours are not addressed under human rights laws. Bullies are typically cruel, demeaning and hostile towards the targets of their bullying. The actual issue of bullying is not addressed by the law, except when the behaviour does become a criminal issue – e.g. extortion, physical assault etc. Bullying can be broken down into four types; physical (hit or kick victims; take/damage personal property), verbal (name calling; insults; constant teasing), relational (try to cut off victims from social connection by convincing peers to exclude or reject a certain person), and cyber bullying. The following is a non exhaustive list of tactics used by bullies to control their targets:

1. unwarranted yelling and screaming directed at the target
2. continually criticizing the target's abilities
3. blaming the target of the bullying for mistakes
4. making unreasonable demands related to performance
5. repeated insults or put downs of the target
6. repeated threats to remove or restrict opportunities or privileges
7. denying or discounting the targets accomplishments
8. Threats of and actual physical violence

## **3. RESPONSE AND REMEDIES**

It is the position of Trails West that harassment and bullying cannot and should not be tolerated in any environment, including hockey. Both harassment and bullying are unacceptable and harmful. Trails West recognizes the serious negative impact of all types of harassment and bullying on personal dignity, individual and group development and performance, enjoyment of the game and in some cases, personal

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safety.

At the same time, Trails West recognizes that not all incidents of harassment and bullying are equally serious in their consequences. Both harassment and bullying cover a wide spectrum of behaviours, and the response to both must be equally broad in range, appropriate to the behaviour in question and capable of providing a constructive remedy. There must be no summary justice or hasty punishment. The process of investigation and settlement of any complaint of harassment or bullying must be fair to all parties, allowing adequate opportunity for the presentation of a response to the allegations.

Minor incidents of harassment or bullying should be corrected promptly and informally, taking a constructive approach and with the goal of bringing about a change in negative attitudes and behaviour.

More serious incidents should be dealt with more formally. Complaints should be handled in a timely, sensitive, responsible and confidential manner. There should be no tolerance of reprisals taken against any party to a complaint. The names of parties and the circumstances of the complaint should be kept confidential except where disclosure is necessary for the purposes of investigation or taking disciplinary measures.

Anyone making a complaint which is found to be clearly unfounded, false, malicious or frivolous may be subject to discipline.

Procedures for handling complaints brought against volunteers of Trails West are detailed in the document entitled "**Trails West Harassment and Bullying Complaint Procedures.**"