

Anti-Bullying Policy

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

The Golden Minor Soccer Association (GMSA) has adhered to this Anti-Bullying Policy to help guide and protect the children that participate in our activities as players, referees, coaches or in any other capacity. Bullying can be defined as intentional hurtful and aggressive behaviour that makes others feel uncomfortable, scared or upset, and it is the responsibility of the club, our staff and volunteers to create a safe, free of bullying soccer environment.

**Resources below were provided by the Government of British Columbia*

IMPORTANCE OF AN ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

According to the data provided by the Provincial Government, 1 in 3 Canadian teens say they've been bullied recently and almost half of Canadian parents say their kid has been bullied at some point.

A person who shows bullying behaviour usually picks on another person's culture, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, looks, religion, or sexual orientation - children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, two-spirited, queer or questioning (LGBTQ) are discriminated against three times more than heterosexual students.

The effects of bullying can be traumatic and long-lasting, affecting even adulthood by causing extended psychological harm.

DEFINING BULLYING

It's important to know the difference between bullying and single acts of aggression or conflict. Not all mean or rude behaviour or conflict is bullying. Understanding the difference helps when it comes to knowing how to intervene.

Bullying is a persistent pattern of unwelcome or aggressive behaviour that hurts others physically and/or emotionally. For a situation to be considered bullying, three indicators are usually present:

- **Power** – children who bully acquire their power through physical size and strength, by status within the peer group, and by recruiting support of the group.
- **Frequency** – bullying is not a random act. It is this factor that brings about the anticipatory terror in the mind of the child being bullied that can be so detrimental and have the most debilitating long-term effects.
- **Intent to harm** – children who bully generally do so with the intent to either physically or emotionally harm the other child.

A person who shows bullying behaviour says or does something intentionally hurtful to others and they keep doing it, with no sense of regret or remorse – even when it's obvious that they've hurt a person or when they're asked to stop.

TYPES OF BULLYING

- **Physical** – hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing, damaging property.
- **Verbal** – name-calling, insulting others, teasing, intimidating others, making homophobic or racist comments, verbal abuse.
- **Social and emotional (or relational)** – Doing things to harm someone else’s reputation or make them feel embarrassed or humiliated by lying, spreading rumours, making mean gestures or jokes, excluding someone.
- **Cyber** – teasing or humiliating a person online using social media, cruel websites (e.g. posting photos of others on rating websites), video games, instant message or texting. Cyberbullying is constantly evolving and changing with new technology and it can reach a child even in the privacy of their own home.

SIGNS THAT A CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

Kids who are being bullied by others will often display a change in behaviour or emotions, like:

- Not wanting to go to school or participate in extra-curricular activities.
- Anxious, fearful or over-reactive.
- Having low self-esteem and making negative comments about themselves or a former friend
- Regular complaints of stomachaches, headaches, and other physical symptoms without any particular cause.
- Less interest in school or soccer.
- Injuries, bruising, damaged clothing, or broken items.
- Unhappy and irritable.
- Trouble sleeping, nightmares, bedwetting.
- Frequently crying.
- Threatens to hurt themselves or others.
- Significant changes in social life (i.e. no one is calling or inviting them out).

SIGNS THAT A CHILD IS ENGAGING IN BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Kids who exhibit bullying behaviour may show signs that they are using power aggressively, such as:

- Little concern for the feelings of others.
- Aggressive with siblings, parents, teachers, friends and animals.
- Bossy and manipulative to get their own way.
- Coming home with unexplained objects or extra money.
- Secretive about possessions, activities or where they've been.
- Easily frustrated and quickly angered.
- Believe aggression is an acceptable way to resolve conflicts.
- Abuse others physically or verbally.
- Get into fights and blame others for starting them.
- Have a need to dominate others.
- Have two or three friends who are also aggressive.
- Hang out with increasingly younger children.
- Quick to interpret accidents or neutral events as deliberate hostile acts.

GOLDEN MINOR SOCCER ASSOCIATION'S ANTI-BULLYING REPORTING PROCEDURE

1. Any incident of bullying or harassment should be reported to the team coach as soon as possible.
2. The team coach will investigate the incident speaking to both parties individually.
3. The team coach 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 coach will file a Bullying Incident Report Form with the GMSA Board within 30 days of receiving the information that an incident has occurred.
5. The GMSA Vice President will keep a record of all bullying 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 GMSA VP and taken to the whole Board of Directors.
7. Upon receipt of a second incident referral, the board will make a ruling on possible intervention and/or disciplinary action.
8. If mediation and disciplinary action do not bring the bullying or harassing behaviour to an end, the GMSA Board may consider further disciplinary action or player expulsion from the Club.
9. In any situation where it is deemed necessary and appropriate by the GMSA Board, the police may be consulted regarding matters of bullying or harassment.

From Canada Soccer's Guide to Safety: *"There is no express time limit for initiating a complaint, but every effort should be made to quickly bring the complaint to the attention of the appropriate organizational leadership to stop the bullying behaviour as soon as possible and to make sure that memories are fresh, and behaviour can be accurately recalled"*.

GOLDEN MINOR SOCCER ASSOCIATION'S ANTI-BULLYING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

If the club decides it is appropriate to intervene after receipt of a referral from the GMSA Board, 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 GMSA Board 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 involved with both athletes should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

BC SOCCER ALIGNMENT

All GMSA policies must align with BC Soccer's Bylaws, Rules & Regulations, and applicable Policies and procedures.