
Markham Soccer Club



Anti-Bullying Policy

Effective Date: July 7, 2025

Introduction

MSC is committed to an environment where everyone is treated with respect. Irresponsible behaviour by members, parents, volunteers, coaches, employees and/or officers harms our community and will be subject to sanction under this policy.

Statement of Intent

MSC does not tolerate bullying. All members are expected to know what bullying is and how to report it. All reports are taken seriously and ***support those affected***.

Objectives of the MSC Anti-Bullying Policy

- Ensure bullying is not tolerated.
- Educate our community on what constitutes bullying.
- Define a clear path for reporting and addressing incidents.
- Offer assurance and support to those affected.

Definition of “Bullying”

Bullying involves intentional harm, emotional, verbal, or physical, and includes exclusion, harassment based on race, gender, or sexuality, and the misuse of technology. Bullying can include:

- Verbal bullying through derogatory comments, lies, false rumours, teasing, ridicule, and bad names.
- Emotional bullying through being unfriendly, sending tormenting messages through social media, social exclusion or isolation, being left out or ignored.
- Physical bullying through pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, or any other use of violence.
- Attacking because of religion, race or colour, gender or sexuality, including but not limited to taunts, graffiti, gestures, etc.
- Sexually unwanted contact or comments.

Signs and Indicators of Bullying

A player may indicate they are being bullied by signs of behaviour. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate further if a child:

- Communicates that they are being bullied.
- Is afraid or unwilling to go to practice or games.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Feels ill before training sessions

- Is nervous or jumpy when a message is received.
- Comes home with clothes torn or training equipment that is damaged.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully).
- Is frightened to say what is wrong.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

Severe situations may present the following indicators:

- Cry themselves to sleep or has nightmares.
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Is bullying other children or siblings.
- Stops eating.
- Attempts suicide, runs away or hurts themselves deliberately.

Coaches Bullying Players

Coaches hold a position of authority and trust. Bullying by a coach can severely damage a player's emotional well-being and trust in sport.

Bullying by coaches may be more difficult to detect due to the perceived power imbalance and normalization of aggressive behaviour in competitive settings.

Examples of coach bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Persistent yelling, ridiculing, or belittling players in front of peers.
- Public shaming or isolating players for mistakes.
- Using threats, sarcasm, or humiliation to control behaviour or performance.
- Favoritism or exclusion that undermines team cohesion and self-worth.
- Imposing excessive punishment (e.g., unnecessary physical drills, benching, or verbal reprimands).

Such behaviour is inappropriate regardless of intent and violates MSC's commitment to safe sport. Coaches are expected to model respectful, supportive, and constructive conduct at all times.

Players and parents are encouraged to report any incidents of coach bullying to the Executive Director. All reports will be treated confidentially and with care.

Directions for Noticing Bullying

- Speak calmly with the player.
- Take all claims seriously.
- Reassure the player that they have done the right thing by reporting.
- Never confront other parents directly.
- Do not promote retaliation.
- Record and report to the Executive Director immediately.

Procedures

1. Report incidents immediately to the Executive Director, and then submit a written report.
2. MSC will investigate and respond promptly.
3. Parents may be asked to discuss the problem.
4. Police may be consulted in some cases.
5. Offenders may be removed from the Club pending review.
6. All cases are documented and monitored.

Applicability and Acknowledgment

This policy applies to:

1. All members of the Board of Directors
2. All Club staff and employees
3. All coaches
4. All managers
5. All players
6. All parents, family members, guardians, caregivers
7. All referees
8. All volunteers

All elected Club officials, volunteers, MSC staff, coaches, managers, and referees must sign a form acknowledging their understanding and acceptance of the Anti-Bullying Policy. This Policy shall be posted on the MSC website always and communicated to parents and players at the beginning of every program cycle. Ignorance of the Anti-Bullying Policy shall not be considered a valid defense against a complaint.