
Markham Soccer Club



Zero Tolerance 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.

MSC Zero Tolerance Policy

MSC is a strong supporter of making sport safe for its youth. This policy is to help ensure the safety and enjoyment of soccer for all, by condemning all forms of abuse including verbal, physical, emotional and sexual, while attempting to protect individuals from abuse.

MSC supports zero tolerance as it relates to all forms of abuse: verbal, physical, emotional, and sexual.

All relationships within MSC context – whether involving members of the Board of Directors, Club staff, coaches/managers, volunteers, players, parents/family members, supporters or referees – must be based on mutual trust and respect.

Any act of abuse is a betrayal of that trust. MSC will investigate and act upon all complaints or reports of inappropriate behaviour.

This Zero Tolerance Policy attempts to respect diverse individual and cultural viewpoints while protecting individuals from real or perceived abuse.

Definitions of Abuse

1. Verbal abuse includes remarks that are rude or threatening in nature and that tend to demoralize or demean another person. Words that degrade another person constitute a form of verbal abuse. Verbal abuse includes racial or ethnic insults. All complaints of verbal abuse will be investigated by the Club and may be reported to police with the consent of the victim or, in the case of a minor, a parent.
2. Physical abuse refers to inappropriate behaviour such as punching, pushing, slapping, kicking, spitting or pinching another individual. All complaints of physical abuse will be investigated by MSC and may be reported to police with the consent of the victim or, in the case of a minor, a parent.
3. Emotional abuse signifies the lack of sensitivity on the part of anyone associated with MSC towards another individual. Club officials (Board members, coaches, and managers) should be aware of the power that is

inherent in such positions and strive for sensitivity in dealing with individuals in positions of supervision (players, MSC staff, volunteers) and with parents. Emotional abuse includes racial, physical or ethnic insults. All complaints of emotional abuse will be investigated by MSC.

4. Sexual shall be defined as: a) sexual intercourse or other forms of physical sexual relations between at least one individual associated with the Club and another person where the activity is not consensual b) all sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual relations with a minor c) touching of a sexual nature and d) behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature. MSC will immediately report all complaints of sexual abuse to the police.

Reporting Guidelines and Procedures

1. Violations of the Zero Tolerance Policy should be reported immediately to the MSC office by the victim(s) and/or by those close to them (a parent, a teammate, a coach etc.).
2. A complaint can be communicated verbally, initially, to a Club official or employee but must be followed up in writing (letter and/or email).

If the complaint involves physical or sexual abuse, an MSC official or employee will contact the police if the individual alleging abuse has not already done so and with the individual's consent.

3. All complaints of abuse will be immediately investigated by MSC.
4. All complaints to MSC must be in written form before a complaint is addressed. However, MSC will immediately report criminal activities to the police (with the consent of the individual alleging abuse) without a written complaint.
5. Once a written complaint has been filed with MSC, a discipline committee consisting of at least three Board members will discuss the complaint with the individual alleging abuse (note: in the case of sexual abuse, MSC may designate a Club official of the same gender as the individual alleging abuse to contact the victim). (Refer also to the Ontario Soccer Policies)
6. A Board member assigned to lead the investigation into the complaint will schedule a Discipline Hearing within ten (10) business days of notice in the individual(s) whom the complaints have been filed against. The individual(s) who are named on the complaint shall be contacted and requested to appear at the Discipline Hearing.
7. In the case of physical abuse such as fighting, kicking, etc. the Discipline Committee will decide between either a Discipline by Review or Discipline by Hearing process to determine appropriate penalties and/or suspensions.

8. Discipline shall be heard by three (3) Board members one of whom is the Discipline Chair. If a certified Chair is not available within MSC, the District or Ontario Soccer will be asked to provide a certified Chair for these purposes.
9. The committee shall hold a hearing and invite the individual(s) named on the complaint to be present at the hearing. Only individuals called by the committee shall be allowed to participate in a hearing. The committee shall then deliberate in camera following the meeting with the individual(s) who are named on the complaint.
10. The decision shall be communicated to the individual alleging abuse and the individual named in the complaint within ten (10) working days of the Hearing.
11. Penalties for contravening the Zero Tolerance Policy can range from a permanent suspension from MSC, suspension for a specified period, and a probationary period where the individual can continue with MSC. All committee decisions are final.
12. Ontario Soccer guidelines for suspensions and penalties may be used as guidance in rendering suspensions for physical abuse issues such as Violent Conduct (fighting, kicking, etc.).
13. Individual(s) who are charged with a criminal offense involving MSC related incidents shall be immediately suspended from MSC pending resolving of the charges. No Discipline Hearing shall take place when an individual is facing criminal charges for MSC-related incidents. MSC members who are convicted of a Criminal Code of Canada offense are subject to suspension or removal.
14. Any individual who is convicted of a criminal offense resulting from sexual or physical abuse shall be banned for life from MSC.

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 Zero Tolerance Policy. This Zero Tolerance 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 Zero Tolerance Policy shall not be considered a valid defense against a complaint.