



Belle River & District Minor Hockey Association

HARASSMENT AND ABUSE POLICY

The BRDMHA is a youth hockey program dedicated to providing an organized environment to the residents of the Lakeshore Area.

The BRDMHA must endeavour to provide a sports environment free from all forms of harassment and abuse. Our members will be treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to participate in a program that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits discrimination.

By providing a harassment free environment, we will promote the growth of volunteerism and the development of our players. We are committed to the education of all our members so they can understand the harm, both physical and emotional, that can take place in an environment where harassment is allowed.

Each member of the BRDMHA will be aware of their responsibilities in eliminating harassment and abuse from our association. There will be zero tolerance for all forms of harassment.

When it does occur, it will be dealt with swiftly and fairly, taking the utmost care to protect the privacy of everyone involved in the incident. Together, we can make this possible, our members deserve no less.

PLAYERS

The players are our most important members. From their earliest involvement to the time they leave us, their growth as hockey players and young adults depends on our commitment to provide them with a harassment free environment in which to develop these skills. Their well being must be protected not only in the arenas but whenever they are involved in BRDMHA sanctioned activities. We are legally and morally bound to protect them from all forms of harassment. Sports are meant to be a time to develop not only hockey skills, but also life skills.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers by definition are the backbone of our association. We depend on their dedication and unique skills and talents to fill the different positions needed to provide a hockey program. Volunteers run the BRDMHA. Their willingness to spend long hours away from their own families, providing opportunities for the sons and daughters of our members are at times under appreciated. All members of the BRDMHA owe these people a vote of confidence, our respect and our thanks. For these reasons and many others, we must provide rules, guidelines and a risk free environment allowing them to continue providing the leadership that makes the BRDMHA successful.

PARENTS

Parents are also stakeholders in the Harassment and Abuse Policy. They must feel comfortable with our efforts to provide their sons and daughters with a safe and harassment free environment to play hockey. They must know we are doing everything possible to protect their children.

Parents must know our policy and their part in making the policy successful. The safety of their children should be their primary concern, wins and losses must take second place to safety.

CHILD ABUSE DEFINED

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.

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.

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 the hair or ears, throwing, shoving, grabbing, hazing or excessive exercise as a form of punishment.

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:

1) Contact

- Touched or fondled in sexual areas
- Forced to touch another's sexual areas
- Kissed or held in a sexual manner
- Vaginal or anal intercourse
- Forced to perform oral sex
- Vaginal or anal penetration with a finger or object
- Sexual hazing

2) Non-contact

- Obscene phone calls
- Flashing
- Shown pornography
- Forced to watch sex acts
- Intrusive questions and comments
- Indecent exposure

- Forced to pose for sexual videos or photographs

NEGLECT

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.

HARASSMENT

Behaviour including comments, conduct or gestures which is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, malicious, degrading, or otherwise offensive to an individual or group of individuals or behaviour which creates an uncomfortable environment, or which might reasonably be expected to cause embarrassment, insecurity, discomfort, offence or humiliation to another person or group, including but not limited to:

- Written or verbal abuse or threats
- Physical assault
- Unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes, or taunting about a person's body, sexual orientation, attire, age, marital status, ethnic or racial origin, religion, etc.
- Displaying of sexually explicit, racist or other offensive or derogatory material, sexual, racial, ethnic or religious graffiti
- Practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, endangering a person's safety or negatively affecting performance
- Hazing or initiation rites
- Leering or other suggestive or obscene gestures
- Intimidation
- Condescension, paternalism, or patronizing behaviour which undermines self respect or adversely affects performance
- Comments, conduct gestures or contact of a sexual nature that is likely to cause offence or humiliation or that might be perceived as placing a condition of a sexual nature on selection or advancement
- False accusations or harassment motivated by malice or mischief and meant to cause harm, are considered to be harassment
- Acts of retaliation towards an individual making a harassment complaint

DISCIPLINE IN SPORT

Discipline is an indispensable part of hockey and should not be confused with discrimination or harassment. However, it is of vital importance that those in authority:

- Set and communicate performance and training standards to all participants
- Ensure that training involving touching or other physical contact occurs in an appropriate setting and only after informed consent has been sought and received
- Be consistent and non-harassing in taking a corrective or punitive action
- Use non-harassing terminology; address individuals by name and avoid the use of derogatory, slang or offensive terms.

DUTY TO REPORT

The Canadian Hockey Association realizes that persons working closely with children and youth have a special awareness of abusive situations. Therefore, these people have a particular responsibility to ensure the safety of Canada's young, by knowing their provincial protection acts and following through as required.

Every province and territory in Canada, except the Yukon, has mandatory reporting laws regarding the abuse and neglect of children and youth. Consequently, it is the policy of the CHA that any CHA personnel (part-time and full-time staff, volunteer, participant, team official, on-ice official) or CHA partner (parent or guardian) 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 Service. In Ontario, a person is considered a child up to the age of 16 years.

Those involved with the CHA in providing hockey opportunities for participants understand and agree that abuse or neglect, as defined above, may be the subject of a criminal investigation and/or disciplinary procedures. Failure to report an offence and thereby, to provide safety for participants may render the adult who keeps silent legally liable for conviction under provincial legislation.

Through education our National body, Branch Representatives and local hockey association personnel, the CHA is weaving a tighter safety web around our most precious resource... THE PLAYERS!

CODE OF CONDUCT

BRDMHA dedicates itself to the advancement of minor hockey for all individuals by ensuring meaningful opportunities and enjoyable experiences in a safe sportsmanlike environment.

BRDMHA has adopted this "Code of Conduct" in which all members are expected to follow. The purpose of this "Code of Conduct" is to maintain a fun, pleasurable experience for all who attend any function under the BRDMHA.

The BRDMHA "Code of Conduct" follows the guidelines provided by the Ontario Minor Hockey Association and Hockey Canada Abuse and Harassment Policies and Procedures.

The BRDMHA Association "Code of Conduct" places an emphasis on respect:

1. Respect the game;
2. Respect the rules;
3. Respect the opponents;
4. Respect the Coaches, Officials, Parents, Executives, Players, Arena Staff, Volunteers and their decisions;
5. Respect the facility;
6. Maintain self-control at all times

GAME OFFICIALS

Referees, linesmen, timekeepers, official scorers are an integral part of the game of hockey. In many instances, they are older and more experienced. Regardless, they have an important role to play to ensure that play is safe, fair and enjoyable - that teams strive to win. Play is still conducted "In the spirit of the game".

The onus on officials is to be fair to both teams in the enforcement of the rules. Officials must treat the players, coaches and other game officials such as convenors, and spectators with respect, and in return, should be treated with respect before, during and after games. Officials must handle games and players in a manner that promotes fair play and good sportsmanship.

Officials should not have to tolerate harassment from spectators, parents, players or coaches. They have the full support of the BRDMHA. Those who are responsible for subjecting officials to harassment may be removed from the arena and subject to further disciplinary measures as determined by the Board of the BRDMHA.

POLICE RECORD CHECK CRITERIA

Who should get a police record check?

Police record checks are an essential part of this association's ongoing management of volunteers. Police checks will be required every two years.

Record checks will be required for the following individuals:

- BRDMHA Board Members
- Coaches and Assistant Coaches
- Trainers, Team Managers and Parent Liaisons
- All other volunteers who come in direct contact with players on a consistent basis, and those who are responsible for handling funds either for a team, division, or other association related functions.

Criteria for Acceptance as a Volunteer with the BRDMHA

Those individuals whose police check show conviction or pending charges for Physical or Sexual assault, and indictable criminal offences for child abuse, during any point in their lifetime are not acceptable candidates for a volunteer position with the BRDMHA. These applicants will not be permitted to participate in any way, or in any capacity with this association.

Those individuals with outstanding Criminal Code convictions (other than physical or sexual assault, and child abuse) 5 years old or more recent, or have charges pending for certain offences will not be accepted for a direct service position with this association. These offences include, but are not limited to:

- Current prohibitions or probation orders forbidding the individual to have contact with children under the age of 14
- Outstanding convictions or charges pending for any violent offence, whether or not it involved weapons
- Outstanding convictions or charges pending for criminal driving offences, including but not limited to impaired driving.
- Individuals with outstanding convictions (5 years older or more recent), for provincial offences related to a bona fide occupational requirement or qualification, may be excluded from a position of trust, depending on the circumstances
- Applicants may be rejected as a result of other information gained during the police records check process or through the screening process as a whole, or as a consequence of other factors. The applicant has the right to know why he or she is being refused, and may appeal to the Board of Directors in writing.

It should be noted that every volunteer, once accepted, is obliged to inform the appropriate association executive if he or she is charged, tried or convicted of any offence under the criminal code or under other provincial or federal statutes. That is if the offence is relative to a position of trust held by the individual. If charges are pending while volunteering for BRDMHA, that individual will be suspended pending resolution, or that individual can resign and return when then situation has been resolved. (In accordance with BRDMHA Police check policy).

PARENTS BEHAVIOUR

It's natural for parents to be concerned about how their child is being coached and the methods utilized. If you have serious concerns, bring the issue to the attention of the Team Manager or Parent Liaison to arrange a meeting with the coach. By discussing your concerns calmly and rationally, you should be able to resolve the problem. If you are unable to reach an understanding, contact the Convenor or Vice President of the division.

Confrontations between coaches and parents that are driven by emotion usually end with a bad result. These confrontations have on occasion escalated from verbal to physical exchanges and there have been cases where coaches have been seriously injured.

Parent/Guardian Grievance Procedure

If a parent or guardian has a concern and would like to speak to the coach, he or she must first contact the team's parent liaison.

After a twenty-four hour waiting period, the parent liaison will arrange a meeting between the parent/guardian, coach and parent liaison. If the issue is not resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, it may be referred to the BRDMHA Abuse and Harrassment Director via the BRDMHA Incident Report Form.

*It should be noted that incident forms will not be accepted once 30 days have passed after the incident. This does not apply to sexual/physical abuse