

WSA Zero Tolerance Policy

Wakefield Soccer Association (WSA) is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable environment for its members, participants, coaches, officials and volunteers and to prevent abusive conduct and harassment in any form while participating within the organization. WSA promotes good sportsmanship and encourages qualities of mutual respect, courtesy and tolerance in all members, participants, coaches, officials, staff and volunteers.

To this end, WSA has established the following guidelines of behavior and procedures for our staff, volunteers, coaches, officials and participants. All members of the organization, as well as parents, spectators and other invitees are expected to observe and adhere to these guidelines.

1. Abuse or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated within the organization. This means WSA does not accept physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse, harassment or similar misconduct from any person towards athletes, staff, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents, spectators or any other persons while they are participating in or preparing for events or activities conducted under the auspices of WSA.
2. Physical and sexual abuse, including, but not limited to, striking, hitting, kicking, biting or wanton gesturing, lewd remarks, indecent exposure, unwanted physical contact, any form of sexual contact or inappropriate touching are strictly prohibited within the organization and as a part of its events and activities. Physical abuse does not include physical contact that is reasonably designed to coach, teach or demonstrate soccer skills.
3. Emotional abuse or verbal abuse is also prohibited. This may include, but is not limited to: yelling, insulting, threatening, mocking, demeaning behavior or making abusive statements in regard to a person's race, gender, religion, nationality/ethnicity, sex or age. Emotional abuse does not include controlled and disciplined verbal communication that is generally accepted in soccer as a reasonable method of coaching or teaching the sport.
4. To further protect youth participants, as well as our coaches, officials and volunteers, we strongly advise that no adult person allow himself/herself to be alone with a child or with any group of children in a private setting during or while they are participating in sponsored activities of WSA. In particular, in such circumstances, we recommend that coaches or other adult members of the organization:
 - Do not drive alone with a child participant in the car without parental consent
 - Do not take a child alone to locker rooms, bathrooms, or any other private room

- Provide one-on-one training or individual coaching with the assistance of another adult or athlete
 - Have private conversations with youth participants within view of others instead of a private setting
 - Do not socialize individually with the participants outside of sponsored activities.
5. In the event of an overnight stay with youth participants, children should be paired up with other children of the same gender and similar age group, with chaperones in separate but nearby rooms.
6. **REFEREES:** With respect to referees, all coaches, players, and spectators will treat officials with dignity and respect irrespective of competency or performance. Yelling, insulting, threatening, mocking, demeaning behavior or making abusive statements regarding a referee's performance constitutes grounds for disciplinary action.

It is the responsibility of ALL coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their players and supporters for all matches. A coach's responsibility for referee support and spectator control includes the times prior to, during, and after the game at the field and surrounding areas.

All individuals responsible for a team and all spectators shall support the referee. Failure to do so will undermine the referee's authority and has the potential of creating a hostile environment for the players, the referee, and all the other participants and spectators.

No one, except the players, should address the referee during the game. Remarks on calls / non calls, criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation, or negative feedback will not be tolerated.

Exceptions for Coaching Staff or Players during the Match:

1. Responding to a referee initiating communication.
2. Making substitutions.
3. Pointing out emergencies or safety issues.

Exceptions for Coaching Staff during Half Time:

1. Coaches may ask for an explanation of a call or rule.
2. Polite and friendly feedback can be given to a referee in a respectful tone of voice.

Penalties (Coaching Staff and Players):

1. Initial Minor Infraction - Verbal Warning.
2. Major Infraction - Warning (caution) or Dismissal (ejection) depending on the seriousness.
3. Subsequent Infractions - Warning (caution) or Dismissal (ejection) depending on the seriousness.

Exceptions for Fans and Spectators:

1. Responding to a referee initiating communication.
2. Pointing out emergencies or safety issues.

Penalties (Fans and Spectators):

1. First Infraction - The referee at the next stoppage of play will ask the coach to quiet the offender.
2. Second Infraction - Verbal Warning. The referee at the next stoppage of play will ask the coach to warn the offender that the next infraction will result in either removal of the offender or the referee will abandon the match.
3. Third Infraction - The referee at the next stoppage of play will instruct the coach to direct the offender to leave the field. The referee will abandon the game if the offender does not leave the field immediately.

Note:

It is and always will be the coach's responsibility for the safety of his/her players. The coach always has the authority to stop play and remove his/her team from the game (either temporarily or permanently) if he/she feels the conditions are unsafe. A parent also has the authority to remove his/her child from an unsafe situation. A coach also has recourse regarding a referee's performance via the game card or via a more formal complaint through the league.

7. WSA will timely respond to any and all allegations of abuse or harassment in matters that are within the purview and jurisdiction of the organization. Within one week of a reported violation, the alleged offender will meet before a panel of five representatives appointed by WSA's Board of Directors. Notification to the alleged violator stating date, time, and location of the meeting will be made by WSA's President. Within 5 business days after the meeting, the panel will decide what appropriate action is necessary, if any. Such action will be communicated in writing to the alleged violator by WSA's President.

8. When deemed necessary and appropriate, this information should be communicated to the appropriate authorities for investigation and should be reviewed by appropriate officials, with timely notification to the alleged offender of such allegations.
9. Any person accused of sexual or physical abuse may be asked to resign voluntarily or may be suspended until the matter is investigated and resolved. Regardless of criminal or civil guilt in the alleged abuse, the continued presence of the person could be detrimental to the reputation of the organization and could be harmful to the participants. A person who is accused but later cleared of the charges, may apply to have a suspension lifted or, if applicable, to be reinstated within the organization. Reinstatement is not a right, and no assurance is made that the person will be reinstated to his/her former position.
10. Any person who violates this Policy, who fails to appropriately report matters covered by this Policy, who makes a false report with respect to matters covered by this Policy or who threatens retaliation or reprisal against an individual for reporting a matter under this Policy will be subject to discipline or other action as may be within the purview and jurisdiction of WSA.

Harassment and abuse are defined in various sources such as state law, case law, sports organization and professional association codes of conduct and training manuals, corporate and business workplace documents and human rights commission materials. WSA has not adopted any specific definition of harassment or abuse, choosing instead to defer to such general sources and definitions for reference and application, depending on the circumstances. As further elaboration of examples given above, the following generally describe conduct that may be considered harassment or abuse:

- Any improper or inappropriate comment, action or gesture directed toward a person or group that is related to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other personal characteristic.
- Creating an environment through behavior or course of conduct that is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, demeaning or offensive.
- Harassment usually occurs when one person engages in abusive behavior or asserts unwarranted power or authority over another, whether intended or not, and may include, for example, name-calling, threats, belittling, unwelcome advances and requests for sexual favors (as well as undue pressure to perform or succeed).
- Harassment includes child abuse.
- Child abuse can include physical contact – or the threat of it – that intentionally causes bodily harm or injury to a child. This may include, for example, hitting, shaking, kicking, shoving, forcing an athlete to participate when injured or mandating excessive exercise as a form of punishment. It may also include touching for the purpose of causing sexual arousal or gratification that involves a child, rape, incest, fondling, exhibitionism and sexual exploitation. It may also include chronic attacks on a child's self-esteem, such as psychologically destructive behavior consisting of ridiculing,

screaming, swearing, racist comments, threatening, stalking, hazing and isolating.

The above Zero Tolerance Policy has been explained to coaches, parents, and players and will be followed to the best of our abilities. This policy will not bear the signature of anyone, but will be universally applied to everyone in contact with WSA.