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Specific Policies Regarding Bullying, Hazing and Sexual Harassment Applicable to All Athletes, Parents, Officials and Sport Organization Staff

The adoption, implementation and enforcement of specific policies regarding bullying, hazing and sexual harassment applicable to all athletes, parents and sport organization staff is an essential "standard of care" obligation for all youth sport organizations.

In addition to a Coaches' Code of Ethics, the "Club Employee and Volunteer Code of Conduct" there should be a policy specific to bullying, hazing and sexual harassment applicable to all participants, parents and staff. Again, the specificity of this policy is critical because it becomes an education tool that defines prohibited behaviors. This clarity and focus on prohibited conduct is particularly important in sport environments where historically, under the guise of tradition, many rituals and other so-called team building activities that could be physically or psychologically harmful have been commonly accepted and passed down from generation to generation of athletes, thereby being viewed as acceptable by parents and participants alike.

Again, the existence of a policy is meaningless if there is no effective communication to educate the individuals to whom it both applies and protects. There must be an annual commitment to review the policy in detail with both populations accompanied by an encouragement to report violations, information on how violations should be reported, an assurance of "whistle-blower protection" and in the case of athletes, an assurance that a trusted parent athlete advocate will be there for a confidential conversation and to act on behalf of the athlete.

The following content is an example of "model policy" in this regard:

1.0 **Sexual Harassment**. Our Club strictly prohibits any coach, staff member, volunteer, parent or athlete from engaging in any form of sexual harassment that affects other employees, volunteers, parents or athletes.

1.1 **Definition**. Sexual harassment is unwanted and often persistent sexual attention and any other behavior with sexual overtones that creates a hostile work or training environment. Verbal harassment

may be directed toward an individual or be comments about an individual that are intended to be or actually are overheard. Specifically, sexual harassment may include written or verbal abuse or threats with sexual overtones, physical contact, sexually graphic literature, sexual advances, demands for sexual favors, sexually oriented comments, jokes, lewd comments or sexual innuendoes, taunts about body, dress, marital status or sexuality, singling out members of one sex or those with a particular sexual orientation for ridicule or devaluing athletic performance or self-respect, sexual or homophobic graffiti, practical jokes based on sex, intimidating sexual remarks, invitations or familiarity, dismissing the contributions of members of one sex or sexual orientation in meetings or training sessions, or other condescending or patronizing behavior, physical contact such as fondling, pinching or kissing, sex-related vandalism, offensive phone calls or photos, and/or bullying on the basis of sex. Sexual harassment also includes all forms of sexual violence such as sexual assault, sexual battery, rape and sexual coercion, which will be referred to authorities as criminal matters.

(a) Zero Tolerance. Sexual harassment by any individual involved in Club activities shall not be tolerated. If observed, employees, parents, athletes and volunteers shall immediately act to ask the person to stop such behavior and report such behavior to their respective supervisors or the Club president. Individuals engaging in sexual harassment shall be subject to immediate termination of employment or association with the Club.

(b) Confidentiality. All sexual harassment complaints (see section 13.0 below) remain confidential unless such confidentiality affects the ability of the Club to maintain a safe environment. No punitive or retaliatory action will be taken against anyone who submits a sexual harassment or other complaint.

2.0 **Zero Tolerance of Hazing, Initiation Rituals, Bullying and Physical Punishment**. "Hazing" and inappropriate team initiation or bonding activities are defined as any actions, whether physical, verbal, mental, emotional or psychological, which subject another person, voluntarily or involuntarily, to any outcome that has the intended or unintended effect of abusing, mistreating, degrading, humiliating, harassing, or intimidating the person, or which may in any fashion compromise the inherent dignity of the person, for the purpose of association with, or induction to, a particular group or team or to control someone younger, weaker or with less power with the intent of harm. Such activities are strictly prohibited, whether initiated by athletes, coaches, staff members, volunteers or parents. The Club is committed to the preservation of civil rights and a safe and non-threatening environment. Athletes should only be asked to engage in activities that are constructive, educational, inspirational, and contributory to intellectual and personal development.

2.1 **Prohibited "Hazing" Behaviors**. Following are examples of, but not limited to, prohibited actions and behaviors constituting hazing, initiation rituals or physical punishment. Forcing, requiring or pressuring an individual to engage, endure or participate in any of the following activities:

- Consumption of alcohol or other drugs
- Ingestion of any substance
- Shaving any part of the body
- Any activity that is illegal, perverse, publicly indecent or contrary to the individual's genuine moral beliefs
- Tamper with or damage property
- Dietary restrictions of any kind unrelated to healthy nutrition

- Deprivation of sleep and waking up/disturbing individuals during normal sleep hours
- Creation of excessive fatigue unrelated to normal training expectations and activities
- Calisthenics or any type of physically abusive exercise unrelated to normal training
- Paddling, whipping, beating or physical abuse of any kind
- Forced performance of public stunts or buffoonery
- Forced tattooing or branding
- Road trips, kidnapping, drop-offs, or any other such unplanned activities
- Work projects without the participation of the full team membership as planned community service or club service activity
- Assigned or endorsed pranks, such as borrowing or stealing items, painting property or objects, or harassing other individuals or groups
- Subjecting a member to cruel and unusual psychological conditions
- Wearing of apparel in public which is conspicuous, not normally in good taste, or designed to humiliate the individual(s) wearing it
- Morally degrading or humiliating games or activities
- Verbal or cruel harassment, including yelling and screaming
- Line-ups, kangaroo courts or any interrogation not consistent with the legitimate testing for information about the purposes and history of the team
- Sexual rituals, assaults and/or required nudity
- Collective behavior such as marching that has no relationship to sport training or performance
- Activities that promote or encourage the violation of state laws or Club policies
- Requiring new members to “greet” initiated members
- Requiring the answering of phones or doors with songs, chants, or riddles
- Requiring yelling or screaming upon entering or leaving a facility
- Deception or threat contrived to convince the new member that he/she will not be permitted to join
- Mentally abusive or demeaning behavior

2.2 **Bullying Definition**. Bullying occurs when there is an imbalance of power and the person who is older, larger, stronger, or more aggressive uses his or her power to control or harm someone in a weaker position. The person bullying has the intent or goal to cause harm (i.e., the act is not accidental) and the action is usually repetitious.

2.3 **Types of Prohibited Bullying Behaviors**. Bullying can take many forms. Examples include but are not limited to: name-calling, teasing, socially spreading rumors, purposely leaving people out of groups by telling them or others they are unwanted, breaking up friendships by threatening others or spreading rumors about a friend, or physically hitting, punching, or shoving a person. Using the Internet, email, texting, mobile phones, social media or other digital technologies to do harm to others is bullying and also prohibited.

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