Anti-Bullying and Harassment

Policy category: Safe Sport / Child Protection
Approved by: Squamish United FC Board of Directors
Effective date: November 15, 2026
Review date: Annually

1. Purpose

Squamish United Football Club (SQUFC) is committed to providing a positive, respectful, inclusive and supportive soccer environment for all members.

Bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation and disrespectful behaviour have no place within our Club.

This policy establishes clear expectations for behaviour, reporting procedures and consequences for individuals who engage in conduct that negatively impacts others or the Club environment.

SQUFC believes everyone has a responsibility to contribute to a culture where all participants feel welcomed, respected and valued.

2. Guiding Principles

SQUFC's approach to harassment and bullying is guided by the following principles:

- Every individual has the right to participate in soccer free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- Everyone shares responsibility for maintaining a respectful and inclusive environment.
- Concerns must be taken seriously and addressed appropriately.
- Individuals must feel comfortable reporting concerns without fear of retaliation.
- All individuals will be treated fairly and respectfully.
- Behavioural expectations apply equally to players, parents, coaches, volunteers and spectators.
- The Club will promote positive relationships, sportsmanship and personal accountability.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals participating in or associated with SQUFC, including:

- Players.
- Coaches and assistant coaches.
- Team managers and team personnel.
- Club staff and volunteers.
- Parents and guardians.
- Match officials.
- Spectators and other members of the Club community.

This policy applies to all Club-related activities and environments, including:

- Training sessions and matches.
- Tournaments, camps and special events.
- Club meetings and social activities.
- Team travel and accommodation.
- Electronic communications, group chats and social media.
- Any other interaction connected to SQUFC.

The policy applies to behaviour that occurs both in person and through digital communication.

4. Definitions

Harassment

Unwanted behaviour, comments or conduct that demeans, humiliates, threatens, intimidates or creates an uncomfortable or hostile environment for another individual.

Examples include:

- Insults, slurs or degrading comments.
- Repeated unwanted comments or attention.
- Threats, intimidation or aggressive conduct.
- Offensive or inappropriate jokes.
- Unwanted behaviour that targets an individual's personal characteristics.

Bullying

Repeated and intentional behaviour intended to cause harm, fear, embarrassment or exclusion. Bullying may involve an imbalance of power and can occur between individuals or groups.

Examples include:

- Name-calling, mocking or humiliation.
- Spreading rumours or encouraging social exclusion.
- Repeatedly targeting or intimidating another player.
- Deliberately isolating teammates.
- Using social status or influence to undermine others.
- Cyberbullying through messages or social media.

Discrimination

Unfair or harmful treatment of an individual based on characteristics protected under applicable human rights legislation, including race, ancestry, place of origin, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, age or disability.

Inappropriate Conduct

Behaviour that may not meet the formal definition of harassment or bullying but is disrespectful, unsportsmanlike or inconsistent with the Club's values and expectations.

Examples include:

- Aggressive or abusive language.
- Belittling or humiliating others.
- Offensive jokes or comments.
- Unsportsmanlike behaviour.
- Encouraging others to disrespect or exclude an individual.

5. Expected Behaviours

All SQUFC participants are expected to:

- Treat teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, parents and spectators with respect.
- Use positive, appropriate and inclusive language.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship, regardless of the result.
- Respect individual differences and backgrounds.

- Support teammates and individuals who may be experiencing bullying or harassment.
- Resolve disagreements respectfully.
- Take responsibility for their words and actions.
- Report bullying, harassment or inappropriate behaviour.
- Contribute positively to an environment where everyone feels included and valued.

6. Prohibited Behaviours

The following behaviours are strictly prohibited within SQUFC:

- Bullying, harassment, intimidation or threats.
- Racist, sexist, discriminatory or derogatory behaviour.
- Name-calling, personal insults or repeated humiliation.
- Hazing, initiation rituals or activities intended to embarrass or exclude others.
- Deliberately excluding, isolating or encouraging others to target an individual.
- Abusive or threatening language towards players, coaches, officials or spectators.
- Cyberbullying or online harassment.
- Sharing offensive, inappropriate or harmful digital content.
- Retaliating against anyone who reports a concern or participates in an investigation.
- Behaviour that negatively impacts the enjoyment, confidence or participation of another individual.

Violations may result in disciplinary action, including removal from Club activities or membership.

7. Digital and Social Media Conduct

SQUFC expects all members to demonstrate the same standards of respect and behaviour online as they would in person.

Individuals must:

- Communicate respectfully through messaging platforms, email and social media.
- Avoid sharing offensive, discriminatory, threatening or inappropriate content.
- Never engage in cyberbullying, online harassment or public humiliation.
- Respect the privacy of other Club members.

- Avoid posting content intended to embarrass, intimidate or undermine another individual.
- Report concerning online behaviour to the Technical Director or Board.

Online behaviour that impacts the wellbeing of Club members or the wider Club environment may be addressed under this policy, even when it occurs outside scheduled Club activities.

8. Responding to Bullying or Harassment

Anyone who witnesses or becomes aware of bullying, harassment or inappropriate behaviour has a responsibility to take appropriate action.

Where safe and appropriate, individuals should:

1. Address or interrupt the behaviour if it is safe to do so.
2. Support the individual affected.
3. Report the incident to a coach, the Technical Director or the Board.
4. Provide relevant information about what happened, when it occurred and who was involved.
5. Cooperate with any subsequent review or investigation.

Bullying and harassment must never be dismissed as part of the game, competitive sport or normal team culture.

Where an incident raises a separate child protection or safeguarding concern, the SQUFC Child Protection Code of Conduct and applicable reporting requirements must also be followed.

9. Reporting Procedures

Any player, parent, guardian, coach, volunteer, official or spectator may report a concern under this policy.

Reports can be made through:

- Direct communication with the Technical Director at technicaldirector@squamishunited.ca.
- The SQUFC Incident Reporting Form.
- Direct communication with a member of the SQUFC Board of Directors at president@squamishunited.ca.

Reporting Structure

The Technical Director is the primary point of contact for harassment and bullying concerns.

If the concern involves the Technical Director, or an individual does not feel comfortable reporting to them, the concern should be directed to the SQUFC Board of Directors.

Reports involving a Board member should be directed to another uninvolved Board member.

Reports may be made by the affected individual or by someone who has witnessed or become aware of the behaviour.

Anonymous reports will be considered, although the Club's ability to investigate may be limited where insufficient information is available.

All reports will be taken seriously and addressed promptly and appropriately.

10. Response and Case Management

Upon receiving a report, SQUFC will take reasonable steps to assess and address the concern.

The response process may include:

1. **Initial assessment:** Reviewing the concern and determining the nature and seriousness of the behaviour.
2. **Information gathering:** Speaking with the individuals involved and relevant witnesses.
3. **Documentation:** Maintaining an appropriate record of the report, information gathered and actions taken.
4. **Assessment:** Determining whether the Club's policies or expected standards of behaviour have been violated.
5. **Resolution:** Determining appropriate corrective or disciplinary action.
6. **Communication:** Informing relevant individuals and parents or guardians, where appropriate, of the outcome and next steps.

The Club will handle concerns fairly, respectfully and as confidentially as possible.

Where an incident raises concerns beyond the scope of this policy, including suspected abuse or other safeguarding matters, the appropriate SQUFC safeguarding procedures and external reporting obligations will apply.

11. Consequences for Violations

Individuals found to have violated this policy may face disciplinary or corrective action.

Depending on the severity, frequency and circumstances of the behaviour, consequences may include:

- Verbal or written warning.
- Meeting with the individual and/or parent or guardian.
- Required education or behaviour improvement plan.
- Temporary removal from training, matches or Club activities.
- Suspension from Club activities.
- Removal from a team or program.
- Termination of a volunteer or coaching role.
- Termination of Club membership.
- Referral to BC Soccer or other appropriate authorities.

The Club will consider the seriousness of the behaviour, its impact on those affected, whether the behaviour is repeated and any relevant circumstances.

Serious incidents may result in immediate interim restrictions while the matter is being reviewed.

12. Responsibilities of Coaches, Volunteers and Club Personnel

All SQUFC coaches, volunteers and Club personnel are expected to:

- Model respectful and appropriate behaviour.
- Establish clear expectations for players and parents.
- Promote positive team culture and sportsmanship.
- Address inappropriate behaviour when it occurs.
- Report concerns to the Technical Director without delay.
- Support individuals who report or experience bullying or harassment.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality.
- Cooperate with Club investigations.
- Never retaliate against an individual who raises a concern.

Coaches and volunteers are expected to take an active role in maintaining a positive and inclusive team environment.

13. Protection Against Retaliation

SQUFC strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who, in good faith:

- Reports bullying, harassment or inappropriate conduct.
- Supports someone making a report.
- Participates in an investigation.
- Provides information relating to a concern.

Retaliation may include intimidation, exclusion, threats, negative treatment or attempts to discourage someone from reporting.

Any retaliation will be treated as a separate policy violation and may result in disciplinary action.

Squamish United Football Club

SQUFC is committed to creating a soccer environment where everyone feels welcome, respected and valued. We all have a responsibility to contribute to a positive Club culture and ensure that soccer remains an enjoyable and rewarding experience for everyone.