



## **Abuse Policy**

*(as adapted from the policies of Hockey Canada)*

This policy sets out the principles and practices of the Ontario Ball Hockey Federation (OBHF) with regard to abusive behaviour towards participants.

### **A. Relationship to *Harassment Policy***

Some behaviours which are defined as abuse when directed towards a child or youth may constitute harassment when directed towards a peer or when perpetrated between adults. The Ontario Ball Hockey Federation and Canadian Ball Hockey Association's Harassment Policy covers such behaviours. Together, the two policies address the entire spectrum of abusive and harassing behaviours.

### **B. Ontario Ball Hockey Federation's Mission**

The mission of the OBHF is to ensure its participants are provided meaningful opportunities and enjoyable experiences in a safe, sportsmanlike environment. This includes, among other things, a shared responsibility with parents to nurture the physical and emotional well-being of all participants. The OBHF's primary interest is the well being of its participants.

### **C. Statement of Purpose**

The OBHF is part of the sporting community in our country that is committed to seeking better ways to keep our youth safe. Protecting participants from all forms of abuse and neglect, whether emotional, physical or sexual, is an important element of safety. The OBHF considers any form of abuse or neglect to be unacceptable and will do all it can to prevent this intolerable social problem. To this end, the OBHF will promote awareness of all forms of abuse and neglect.

### **D. Policy**

It is the policy of the OBHF that there shall be no abuse and neglect, whether physical, emotional or sexual of any participant in any of its programs. The OBHF expects every parent, volunteer and staff member to take all reasonable steps to safeguard the welfare of its participants and protect them from any form of maltreatment.

### **E. Definitions of Abuse**

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.

#### **a. 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.

**b. Physical Abuse**

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

**c. Neglect**

Neglect is chronic inattention to the basic necessities of life such as clothing, shelter, nutritious diets, education, good hygiene, supervision, medical and dental care, adequate rest, safe environment, moral guidance and discipline, exercise and fresh air. This may occur in sport 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.

**d. Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse, 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:

**Contact** • touched or fondled in sexual areas • forced to touch another person's sexual areas • kissed or held in a sexual manner • forced to perform oral sex • vaginal or anal intercourse • vaginal or anal penetration with an object or finger • sexually oriented hazing

**Non-Contact** • obscene remarks on phone/computer or in notes • voyeurism • shown pornography • forced to watch sexual acts • sexually intrusive questions and comments • forced to pose for sexual photographs or videos • forced to self-masturbate or forced to watch others masturbate

**F. Duty to Report**

Abuse and neglect are community problems requiring urgent attention. The OBHF is committed to help reduce and prevent the abuse and neglect of participants. The OBHF realizes that persons working closely with children and youth have a special awareness of abusive situations.

Therefore these people have a particular reporting 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; the Yukon requests that concerns be reported. Consequently, it is the policy of the Ontario Ball Hockey Federation and Canadian Ball Hockey Association that any OBHF and CBHA personnel (part-time and full-time staff, volunteer, participant, team official, on floor official) or OBHF/CBHA partner (parent, 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 detachment.

Those involved with the OBHF/CBHA in providing ball 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, failure to provide safety for participants may render the adult who keeps silent legally liable for conviction under the provincial child protection acts.

Approved OBHF Board of Directors January 2015