

# Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club Anti-Bullying Policy

## **Purpose**

Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club believes in fostering an environment for its athletes that is free from bullying. "Bullying" is verbal, or written communication (including electronic communication such as texting, email, social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.), physical acts or gestures, or a pattern of behavior that is intended to knowingly cause distress upon one or more persons. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, harassment, intimidation or menacing acts of a person which may, but need not be, based on the person's sex, race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, disability or sexual orientation.

Bullying includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal acts, teasing, inappropriate use of sarcasm or demeaning jokes.
- Name-calling; creating and/or spreading rumors; belittling.
- Non-verbal behavior such as graphic or written statements.
- Sending demeaning or threatening notes emails, electronic messages, or phone calls.
- Using any form social media; Facebook, twitter, YouTube etc. to belittle
- Conduct that is physically or emotionally threatening, hurtful, harmful, humiliating, or inappropriate physical restraint by another person

Determination of whether specific conduct is in fact bullying is contextual and will be made by the Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club appointed investigators upon viewing the totality of the facts and hearing from all witnesses.

Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club has zero tolerance for any individual bullying another individual either at Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club activities (e.g., games, practices, etc.), or outside Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club at school or community events etc.

## **Reporting Bullying Behavior**

Any Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club member who witnesses acts of bullying or receive reports of bullying (of any kind) is required to promptly notify a member of the Executive Committee (in writing) after witnessing the act or receiving a report of bullying.

The Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club President or his/her designee will investigate each report received within 7 days of receiving a report of bullying.

The Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club President or his/her designee will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or guardian of a person who commits a verified act of bullying. The notification will include a response on behalf of Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club and consequences (if appropriate) that may result from further acts of bullying.

Retaliation against an individual, who either orally reports or files a written complaint regarding bullying is prohibited.

The right to confidentiality for both the accuser and the accused shall be preserved whenever possible.

Confidentiality, however, cannot be guaranteed at the onset of an investigation as it cannot be predicted what will be discovered or what kind of hearing will result. If bullying continues, the (alleged) aggressor will be immediately suspended and removed from the organization.

The Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club President or his/her designee will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent or guardian of a person who is a target of bullying of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying.

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## **Investigating Bullying Behavior**

In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes bullying, the totality of the circumstances, the nature of the conduct, the person's history, and the context in which the alleged conduct occurred will be investigated.

Bullying is contextual and each case depends on the circumstances. Some general common traits of bullying include:

- A pattern of repeated, unwanted behaviour that goes beyond mere rudeness.
- A continuation of rude or mean-spirited behaviour after being told to stop.
- Single actions or comments that are so egregious that any reasonable person would consider them to be hurtful or threatening (for example racial or homophobic slurs).
- Often but not always, a power imbalance exists between the bully and the victim

The following are key points to consider during the investigation process: The investigation may consist of separate personal interviews with the accuser, the individual(s) against whom the complaint was filed, and others who may have knowledge of the alleged incident(s) or circumstances giving rise to the complaint. The investigation may also consist of other methods or documents deemed relevant by the investigators.

Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club may take immediate steps to protect the accuser pending the completion of an investigation. The investigation shall be completed promptly. Said reports may be used to compile data regarding the extent of bullying within Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club

## **Consequences for Bullying**

Verified acts of bullying shall result in intervention by the Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club President or his/her designee that is intended to ensure that the prohibition against bullying behavior is enforced.

Bullying behavior can take many forms and may vary dramatically in how serious it is, and what impact it has on the targeted individual and other persons.

Accordingly, there is not a single disciplinary response to bullying. Conduct that rises to the level of "bullying" as defined above will warrant disciplinary action against the (alleged) aggressor of such bullying.

The extent to which to impose disciplinary action is a matter of discretion of the Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club President or his/her designee.

Consequences may include but not be limited to: oral reprimand, written warning, suspension, or termination of membership from Belleville Ravens Volleyball Club.

## **Consequences for Knowingly Making False Reports**

False reports of bullying behaviors will be regarded as serious offenses and will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.