

**OAKVILLE GYMNASTICS CLUB**  
**ANTI-BULLYING AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY**

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**1. Purpose**

The Oakville Gymnastics Club (the "**Club**") is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our athletes, members, coaches, staff members, Board members and volunteers (the "**Members**") so they can participate in Club activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Bullying or harassment of any kind is unacceptable.

If bullying or harassment does occur, all Members should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Our Club is a community. This means that anyone who knows that bullying or harassment is happening is expected to inform the Club through a coach, staff member or volunteer.

**2. Why the Club Needs an Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy**

Bullying can severely inhibit a Member's ability to effectively participate in Club activities. The negative effects of bullying can have an impact on a person for their entire life. The Club wishes to promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour. Therefore, this policy promotes practices within the Club to reinforce our vision, and to remove or discourage practices that negate them.

**3. What is Bullying**

Bullying occurs when an individual or a group uses strength or power to hurt, either physically or emotionally, by intimidating or demeaning others. Bullying can be emotional, physical, racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, verbal or cyber. It is often covert, and is a conscious attempt to hurt, threaten or frighten someone.

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting or humiliating another person. It is perpetuated through the misuse of real or perceived power over a period of time. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Members who are being bullied, may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in athletic performance, behavior patterns, work patterns, lacking concentration or skipping practices, competitions or other Club events.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- **Physical Bullying:** This can include kicking, hitting, pushing and taking away belongings;
- **Verbal Bullying:** This includes name calling, mocking and making offensive comments;
- **Emotional Bullying:** This includes isolating an individual or spreading rumours about them;
- **Cyber-Bullying:** This is where technology is used to hurt an individual – for instance text messaging or posting messages/images on the internet or any form of social media;
- **Racist Bullying:** This occurs when bullying is motivated by racial, ethnic or cultural prejudice;
- **Sexual Bullying:** This is where someone makes unwanted physical contact or makes sexually abusive comments;
- **Homophobic and Biphobic Bullying:** This occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people;
- **Transphobic Bullying:** This occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against people who identify as trans;
- **Disablist Bullying:** This occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against people with any form of disability;
- **Sexist Bullying:** This occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against someone because of their gender

#### 4. **Warning Signs of Bullying**

A Member may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of going to the Club;
- doesn't want to go to the Club;
- changes their usual routine;
- skips practices, events or Club activities;
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- starts stammering;
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- uncharacteristically returns home from the Club crying;
- demonstrates uncharacteristic behaviors on the trip home from the Club;
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- feels ill in the morning;
- begins to do poorly in athletic performance;
- comes home with clothes torn;

- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing";
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully);
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost";
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- is bullying other children or siblings;
- stops eating;
- is frightened to say what's wrong;
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above;
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone;
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

## **5. Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Members who are engaging in bullying need to learn that their behavior can have negative effects upon other members and need to learn different ways of behaving. The Club has a responsibility and obligation to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## **6. What is Harassment**

Harassment is any unwanted physical, verbal, or written behaviour that offends or humiliates.

## **7. Objectives of this Policy**

The Club's Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy is designed to meet or achieve several objectives, including the following:

- (a) All Members should have an understanding of what bullying and harassment is.
- (b) All Members, coaches, staff members, Board members and volunteers should know what the Club policy is on bullying and harassment and follow it when bullying or harassment is reported.
- (c) All athletes, participants and parents should know what the Club policy is on bullying and harassment, and what they should do if bullying or harassment arises.
- (d) As a community organization, the Club takes bullying and harassment seriously. Athletes and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying and harassment is reported.
- (e) Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

## **8. Official Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy**

All Members are expected to abide by, and be accountable for upholding the following:

- (a) All Members will treat everyone with respect.
- (b) The Club believes that bullying and harassment are forms of maltreatment, and that it is the impact, not the intent, of behaviour that matters.
- (c) The Club does not accept any behaviour in which people are bullied, cyberbullied, or harassed.
- (d) When Members see or hear about any incident of bullying, cyberbullying, or harassment, they will respond immediately to stop it.
- (e) If necessary, Members will follow the Club's reporting procedures as described in the Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Harassment Procedure.
- (f) Members shall be responsible for ensuring that their guests at Club facilities or activities abide by this policy.
- (g) Any Member found to maltreat another person, or to stand by while someone is being maltreated, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of membership.