

Harassment and Abuse

The Lakeshore Soccer Club is committed to creating and maintaining a sport environment which is free from discrimination and harassment on prohibited grounds, including race, ancestry, place of origin, color, ethnic origin, citizenship, political opinion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital/family status, language and any other discrimination or harassment prohibited by applicable law.

All children deserve to grow up free from abuse, neglect, and violence but every day in Canada, thousands of children and youth are emotionally, physically, or sexually abused by people they know and trust. Research shows that the tragedy of abuse has a lasting impact on those it touches. The road to recovery is challenging. Some kids make it, but some get lost and continue the cycle... hurting themselves or others.

This is why you need to know about abuse. You need to know how to recognize it, stop it and prevent the cycle from continuing.

Recognizing Harassment and Abuse

When is my child unsafe? Young people are unsafe when someone uses his or her power or position to harm them either emotionally, physically, or sexually this is abuse. Your child's safety is also at risk when she or he is threatened, intimidated, taunted, or subjected to racial, homophobic, or sexist slurs-this is harassment.

What is emotional abuse? Emotional abuse is a chronic attack on a child's self-esteem. It is psychologically destructive behavior by a person in a position of power, authority, or trust. It can take the form of name calling, threatening, ridiculing, intimidating, isolating, hazing, or ignoring a child's needs.

Emotional Abuse is not

- benching a player for disciplinary reasons
- cutting a player from a team after try-outs
- refusing to transfer a player
- limiting field time
- yelling instructions from the bench

What is physical abuse? Physical abuse is when a person in a position of power or trust purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child. This may take the form of slapping, hitting, shaking, kicking, pulling hair, pulling ears, striking, shoving, grabbing, hazing, or excessive exercise as a form of punishment.

What is neglect? Neglect is a chronic inattention to the basic necessities of life such as supervision, medical and dental care, adequate rest, safe environment, exercise, and fresh air. Neglect may occur in sport when injuries are not adequately treated, athletes are made to play with injuries, equipment is inadequate or unsafe, or road trips are not properly

Possible Signs of Harassment / Abuse Your child may not always tell you there is a problem. You know your child best so be aware of unexplained behavior changes such as

- Suddenly becoming aggressive.
- Quitting the team or being reluctant to return to the sport activity.
- Sleep disorders.
- Emotional disorders.
- Sliding grades at school.
- Changes in appetite.
- Fear of washrooms, locker rooms, or closed doors.
- Running away.
- Sudden and disproportionate interest in sex for their age.

It is important to note that sexualized behavior in children is the result of sexual abuse, not its cause

- Reluctance to talk.
- Frequent vomiting.

There may be obvious physical signs such as:

- Bruises
- Scratches
- Inflammation
- Lesions
- Bleeding
- Genital injuries
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Pregnancy.

Be vigilant and talk to your child if you see one or more of these signs, but bear in mind that these symptoms do not always indicate abuse.

What to Do If a Child Reports Harassment / Abuse

There is a significant under-reporting of harassment and abuse. If your child tells you there is a problem:

- listen and believe.
- Never ignore even to seemingly trivial calls for help.

- support your child.
- discuss their options with them.
- help them to restore a sense of control in their lives by involving them in deciding how to deal with the problem.
- reassure them continuously.
- take them somewhere where they can talk freely.
- speak on a level they can understand

What you hear may shock you. No matter what you are told, stay calm and show that you are listening. Children need to know that harassment is not their fault, nor a reflection on them. Possible responses include, "I believe you." "This is not your fault. You are a victim." "I am going to help you."

Harassment and abuse can inflict deep psychological damage on young people. Arrange for counseling to help your child come to terms with what has happened. Other family members may need this support as well.

Your response to eliminate the harassment should be determined by the nature of the behavior and the age of the victim. Options include talking to the coach, manager or club president. This can often clear up a simple problem quickly. If you feel that the situation cannot be resolved at this level, other avenues include:

- reporting the harassment to the club's board of directors
- reporting the harassment to the provincial sport organization.

Contact your club for the phone number of the provincial sport organization. Many organizations have harassment policies in place which outline how the complaint will be heard. Reporting the harassment to the national sport organization. Contact your club for the phone number of the provincial sport organization. Most organizations have harassment policies in place which outline how the complaint will be heard. Calling Kids Help Phone:

1 800 668-6868. Trained counselors are available 24 hours a day to help children deal with painful situations.

Suing under the Civil Code. You may sue anyone who had an opportunity to do something about the abuse, and didn't. This could include the perpetrator, the employer, the national sport organization, the provincial sport organization, the club, and so on.

Calling the rape crisis centre, calling Crimestoppers. This allows you to leave an anonymous tip with a police officer.

Reporting the suspected harassment to your provincial Human Rights Commission.

If you have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child may be suffering abuse, you must report it immediately to the local child protection agency or police. Across Canada, a person is considered a child up to the age of 16 to 19, depending upon the province.

Recognizing the Offenders and the Victims

Abusers come in all shapes and sizes. They come from all age groups, and all cultural and religious groups. However, most abusers are heterosexual males.

Offenders put a lot of time and energy into creating situations in which they have access to children.

Abusers are not strangers in trench coats. They often have likable attributes. Children are most at risk from someone they know. The majority of offenders are known to the child, with relatives accounting for 35 - 40 per cent.

All children are at risk. However, girls are more likely to be sexually abused than boys, and children with a disability are two to 10 times more vulnerable to abuse.

Complaints

LSC participants are encouraged to report suspected discrimination or harassment. Such reports may be made to the President of the LSC, or to any other person in authority.

All such reports shall be brought promptly to the attention of the LSC executive, by whoever receives the report. A complainant may request the assistance of an LSC resource person in understanding these guidelines, in pursuing resolution short of lodging a complaint if appropriate, and in formulating the written complaint. The LSC resource person shall refer the complainant to counseling upon request, and may explore the possibility of alternative forms of dispute resolution with the complainant following the complaint, if appropriate. Should a complainant choose to retain legal counsel at any stage of a complaint or appeal, it shall be at the complainant's own expense.

The Complaint

Although anyone may report discrimination or harassment, a complaint may be made only by persons affected by the alleged discrimination or harassment, or by the President on behalf of the LSC. A complaint shall be in writing, and signed by the complainant or by the President if the complaint is brought on behalf of the LSC. The complaint shall be submitted to the President of the LSC.

The complaint should include particulars of the discrimination or harassment, including details of the incident or incidents, including dates, times, locations, description of action, account of dialogue, the name of the perpetrator(s) and any witnesses or names of other individuals who may also have experienced discrimination or harassment. The complaint should detail any corrective action taken to date. The parties to a complaint are the LSC, the respondent(s) and the complainant(s), if any. The complainant may withdraw the complaint at any time. However, such a complaint may be continued as a complaint by the President on behalf of the LSC, if the LSC does not consent to the withdrawal.

Processing the Complaint

LSC club will adhere to the following steps in order to process a complaint.

-A Child reveals a form of abuse or an abuse is discovered with the adult involved being a coach of volunteer

- The coach or volunteer who is made aware of the abuse claim:
- Report the incident to the police or child protection
- Consult child protection before informing parents
- Inform his superior who will then inform the Director General and President
- The Clubs management will suspend the coach or volunteer suspected of abuse with or without pay until the case is solved. If the person is a volunteer or unpaid employee, determine if they should be removed from their duties immediately.
- Child Protective Services or the police will conduct an investigation. The Club will conduct an internal audit of its policies to determine if changes need to be made
- Based on the results of the investigations:
 - Abuse claim is confirmed: The coach or volunteer is removed from his/her position
 - Abuse claim is not confirmed: Determine if a legal opinion is necessary. Deem if appropriate to remove the coach or volunteer from his/her duties.

Detailed records the investigation and audit will be kept internally.

Complaint Investigation

The LSC Official may decide not to deal with a complaint: if in the opinion of the LSC Official, the facts alleged in the complaint would be insufficient, if proven, to establish discrimination or harassment under the LSC Policy; or if in the opinion of the LSC Official, the investigation of the complaint would not advance the purpose of the LSC Policy in the circumstances, because of a significant delay between the alleged events and the time of the complaint. In all other cases, the LSC Official shall investigate the complaint or appoint and provide terms of reference to an investigator who shall investigate the complaint and make findings of fact. Before the investigation begins, the LSC Official shall advise each respondent of the complaint and shall provide each complainant and respondent a copy of the written complaint, of the LSC Policy and these guidelines, and of the investigator's terms of reference, if any. Before the investigation report is issued, each respondent shall have a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegations. If a respondent declines to do so, or does not respond within the time-frame provided, the investigator's report may nonetheless be issued. All LSC participants, including the respondent(s), must co-operate fully in any investigation under these guidelines. The LSC Official may consult with the investigator during the course of the investigation, may review the investigation report in draft and may provide additional terms of reference to, or request clarification from, the investigator. A copy of the investigation report shall be provided to the complainant(s) and the respondent(s).

Assistance to Respondents A respondent may request the assistance of a LSC resource person without previous involvement in the complaint in understanding these guidelines. The LSC resource person shall refer the respondent to counseling upon request, and may explore the possibility of alternative forms of dispute resolution with the respondent. Should a respondent choose to retain legal counsel at any stage of a complaint or appeal, it shall be at the respondent's own expense.

Determinations

Following investigation the LSC Official shall determine whether discrimination or harassment has been established in light of the findings of fact contained in the investigation report, and if so, the nature and particulars of the discrimination or harassment. The LSC Official's determinations shall be communicated to the complainant(s) and the respondent(s).

Settlement: A complaint may be settled at any stage. A resolution agreement should be in writing and signed by all parties.

Mediation: The LSC may provide a mediator, if the LSC Official views mediation as appropriate and if the complainant and respondent are willing to enter a mediation agreement.

The LSC Official shall have the authority to impose sanctions, if warranted, in light of the determinations.

The complainant(s) and the respondent(s) shall be given a reasonable opportunity to make submissions to the LSC Official prior to the imposition of sanctions.

Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

-A recommendation that a person's membership be revoked in accordance with the by-laws of the LSC.

-Temporary or permanent suspension from employment with LSC, or from participation in some or all of the competitions or activities over which the LSC has jurisdiction. The imposition of such temporary or permanent conditions on continued employment with LSC, or participation in LSC activities as the LSC Official may view as appropriate in the circumstances. The issuance of a warning and/or reprimand.

The LSC Official shall provide the complainant(s) with such information about any sanctions imposed as is appropriate in the circumstances. Should any sanction that the LSC Official views as appropriate require a resolution to be passed by either the LSC Executive Committee or Board of Directors, the LSC Official shall take such action as is appropriate to have the matter placed before the Executive Committee or Board for its consideration, but the matter will not be considered prior to any appeal under these guidelines.

The LSC Official may impose interim measures pending the investigation and disposition of a complaint, if the LSC Official is of the view that the imposition of such measures is in the best interest of the complainant(s), respondent(s) and/or LSC.

Interim measures are not sanctions, and they may take many forms, including but not limited to:

-the imposition of conditions upon the continued participation of the respondent(s) in the activities or work of the LSC.

-suspension of the respondent(s) from participation in the activities or work of the LSC, with or without pay, or under such other terms as are seen to be appropriate, security arrangements.