



Guelph Soccer Zero Tolerance Policy

Guelph Soccer supports zero tolerance as it relates to all forms of abuse: verbal, physical, emotional, and sexual.

All relationships within the Club context - whether involving members of the Board of Directors, Club employees, coaches/managers, players, parents, volunteers, outside suppliers or referees - must be based on mutual trust and respect.

Any act of abuse is a betrayal of that trust.

The Club will investigate and act upon all complaints or reports of inappropriate behaviour.

This Zero Tolerance Policy attempts to respect diverse individual and cultural viewpoints while protecting individuals from real or perceived abuse. This policy applies to any and all Guelph Soccer events including, but not limited to practices, before and after games, events, fundraising, and any and all types of social media, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Definitions of Abuse

- 1) **Verbal Abuse** - Verbal abuse includes remarks that are rude or threatening in nature and that tend to demoralize or demean another person. Words that degrade another person constitute a form of verbal abuse.
 - a. Verbal abuse includes racial, homophobic, transphobic, religious, gendered, or ethnic insults. All complaints of verbal abuse will be investigated by the Club and may be reported to police with the consent of the victim or, in the case of a minor, a parent.
- 2) **Physical Abuse** - Physical abuse refers to inappropriate behaviour such as punching, pushing, slapping, kicking, spitting or pinching another individual. All complaints of physical abuse will be investigated by the Club and may be reported to police with the consent of the victim or, in the case of a minor, a parent.
- 3) **Emotional Abuse** - Emotional abuse signifies the lack of sensitivity on the part of anyone associated with the Club towards another individual. In particular, Club officials (Board members, coaches, and managers) should be aware of the power that is inherent in such positions and strive for sensitivity in dealing with individuals in positions of supervision (players, Club employees, volunteers) and with parents. Emotional abuse includes racial, physical or ethnic insults. All complaints of emotional abuse will be investigated by the Club.
- 4) **Sexual Abuse** - Sexual abuse shall be defined as any and all forms of sexual relations with a minor, touching of a sexual nature and behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature.



The Club will immediately report all complaints of sexual abuse to the police.

Reporting Guidelines and Procedures

Violations of the Zero Tolerance Policy should be reported immediately to the Club office by the victim(s) and/or by those close to them (a parent, a teammate, a coach etc.).

A complaint can be communicated verbally, initially, to a Club official or employee but must be followed up in writing (letter and/or email). If the complaint involves physical or sexual abuse, the Club official or employee will contact the police if the individual alleging abuse has not already done so and with the individual's consent.

All complaints of abuse will be immediately investigated by the Club.

All complaints to the Club must be in written form before a complaint is dealt with. However, the Club will immediately report criminal activities to the police without a written complaint.

Individual(s) who are charged with a criminal offense involving Club related incidents shall be immediately suspended from the Club pending resolving of the charges. No Discipline Hearing shall take place when an individual is facing criminal charges for Club related incidents. Club members who are convicted of a Criminal Code of Canada offense are subject to suspension or removal.

Any individual who is convicted of a criminal offense resulting from sexual or physical abuse shall be banned for life from the Club.

Individual(s) who violate the Zero Tolerance Policy for non-criminal activities may apply for reinstatement to the Club in writing one month prior to the end of a time specified penalty.

- 1) Handling Incidents of Abuse during a Recreational League Game (physical, verbal or emotional abuse)
 - The referee must stop a game if an abuse incident involving a coach, player or parent/spectator occurs during a game.
 - If a coach is the source of the abuse, the referee will advise the coach that the game will be abandoned if the abuse continues.
 - If a parent/spectator is the source, the appropriate coach will be informed that the game will be abandoned unless the abuse ceases. If the spectator is not associated with either team, both coaches will ask the spectator to leave.
 - The game will be restarted by the referee only if the abuse ceases.
 - The incident shall be reported to the Club Head Referee by the referee in charge immediately following the game completion or abandonment.
 - If the abuse continues, the referee will abandon the game.
 - He/she must immediately report the incident to the Club Head Referee and fill out a Special Incident Form.



- In cases of physical abuse on a referee, a "Referee Assault Form" must be completed by the referee.

2) Handling Incidents of Abuse in a Non-Game Situation

- Incidents that include spectators, visitors, members of the general public will be dealt on an individual basis.
- These persons, if they are not members, are not subject to official sanctions as per OSA rules.
- If incidents occur, the team to whom these persons are visiting/watching can be held responsible for the actions of their spectators, in the form of loss of standings, forfeit of game, possible suspension of player/coaching staff.
- In the case of serious and/or repeated offenses, Guelph Soccer may have a "Trespass to Property Act" notice issued, served and enforced by the local police service for the area.
- Any serious abuse, be it verbal, physical or sexual, or any other act deemed contrary to the Criminal Code of Canada can and will be reported to authorities for investigation and prosecution.
- Incidents caused by members (executive, coaching staff, players, legal guardians) occurring in a "non-game" situation may be dealt by formal disciplinary proceedings, depending on the circumstances as deemed by the Chair of the Disciplinary Committee as per OSA Disciplinary Rules.

The Club will report all incidents of a criminal nature immediately to police.

3) Application - This Zero Tolerance Policy applies to:

- All elected Club officials
- All Club employees
- All coaches
- All managers
- All players
- All parents/guardians
- All referees
- All volunteers
- All service providers having contact with anyone associated with the Club.
- All spectators, visitors, and anyone on Guelph Soccer owned/rented/leased properties

All members of the club must abide by the Zero Tolerance Policy. This Zero Tolerance Policy shall be posted on the Club's website at all times and communicated to parents and players at the beginning of every program cycle. Ignorance of the Zero Tolerance Policy shall not be considered a valid defense against a complaint.