



Anti-Bullying Policy

ICSF Columbus FC has adhered to this Anti-Bullying Policy to help guide and protect the children that participate in our activities as players, referees, coaches or in any other capacity. Bullying can be defined as intentional hurtful and aggressive behaviour that makes others feel uncomfortable, scared or upset, and it is the responsibility of the club, our staff and volunteers to create a safe, free of bullying soccer environment.

**Resources below were provided by the Government of British Columbia*

IMPORTANCE OF AN ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

According to the data provided by the Provincial Government, 1 in 3 Canadian teens say they've been bullied recently and almost half of Canadian parents say their kid has been bullied at some point.

A person who shows bullying behaviour usually picks on another person's culture, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, looks, religion, or sexual orientation - children who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, two-spirited, queer or questioning (LGBTQ) are discriminated against three times more than heterosexual students.

The effects of bullying can be traumatic and long-lasting, affecting even adulthood by causing extended psychological harm.

DEFINING BULLYING

It's important to know the difference between bullying and single acts of aggression or conflict. Not all mean or rude behaviour or conflict is bullying. Understanding the difference helps when it comes to knowing how to intervene.

Bullying is a persistent pattern of unwelcome or aggressive behaviour that hurts others physically and/or emotionally. For a situation to be considered bullying, three indicators are usually present:

- **Power** – children who bully acquire their power through physical size and strength, by status within the peer group, and by recruiting support of the group.
- **Frequency** – bullying is not a random act. It is this factor that brings about the anticipatory terror in the mind of the child being bullied that can be so detrimental and have the most debilitating long-term effects.
- **Intent to harm** – children who bully generally do so with the intent to either physically or emotionally harm the other child.

A person who shows bullying behaviour says or does something intentionally hurtful to others and they keep doing it, with no sense of regret or remorse – even when it's obvious that they've hurt a person or when they're asked to stop.

TYPES OF BULLYING

- **Physical** – hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing, damaging property.
- **Verbal** – name-calling, insulting others, teasing, intimidating others, making homophobic or racist comments, verbal abuse.
- **Social and emotional (or relational)** – Doing things to harm someone else’s reputation or make them feel embarrassed or humiliated by lying, spreading rumours, making mean gestures or jokes, excluding someone.
- **Cyber** – teasing or humiliating a person online using social media, cruel websites (e.g. posting photos of others on rating websites), video games, instant message or texting. Cyberbullying is constantly evolving and changing with new technology and it can reach a child even in the privacy of their own home.

SIGNS THAT A CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

Kids who are being bullied by others will often display a change in behaviour or emotions, like:

- Not wanting to go to school or participate in extra-curricular activities.
- Anxious, fearful or over-reactive.
- Having low self-esteem and making negative comments about themselves or a former friend
- Regular complaints of stomachaches, headaches, and other physical symptoms without any particular cause.
- Less interest in school or soccer.
- Injuries, bruising, damaged clothing, or broken items.
- Unhappy and irritable.
- Trouble sleeping, nightmares, bedwetting.
- Frequently crying.
- Threatens to hurt themselves or others.
- Significant changes in social life (i.e. no one is calling or inviting them out).

SIGNS THAT A CHILD IS ENGAGING IN BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Kids who exhibit bullying behaviour may show signs that they are using power aggressively, such as:

- Little concern for the feelings of others.
- Aggressive with siblings, parents, teachers, friends and animals.
- Bossy and manipulative to get their own way.
- Coming home with unexplained objects or extra money.
- Secretive about possessions, activities or where they've been.
- Easily frustrated and quickly angered.
- Believe aggression is an acceptable way to resolve conflicts.
- Abuse others physically or verbally.
- Get into fights and blame others for starting them.
- Have a need to dominate others.
- Have two or three friends who are also aggressive.
- Hang out with increasingly younger children.
- Quick to interpret accidents or neutral events as deliberate hostile acts.

ICSF COLUMBUS FC ANTI-BULLYING REPORTING PROCEDURE

ICSF Columbus FC has designated the Executive Director as the recipient of all bullying related incidents and can be notified at ed@icsf.ca at any time. The Executive Director will collect pertinent information related to the event and log the incident confidentially. The issue will be discussed with the parents of the players, and a reminder will be provided about our Code of Conduct and Anti Bullying Policy. Ongoing issues will result in disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, missing practices and games or being removed from the team altogether.

1. *Club Safety Officer (CSO)*
Frank Valente (ed@icsf.ca) is the designated as the Club Anti-Bullying Officer. He is trained in handling bullying situations and will be made available to athletes, parents, coaches, and volunteers.
2. *Comfortable Reporting System*
Athletes, parents, and club members can report bullying through a designated online form or by emailing ed@icsf.ca. Clear instructions for accessing these options will be provided on the club website and during team orientations.
3. *Documentation and Record-Keeping*
All incidents and complaints will be documented. The CSO will keep secure records of each report, noting details like the involved parties, dates, and nature of the incident. This formal record allows for careful tracking and follow-up.
4. *Immediate Response and Assessment*
Upon receiving a report, the CSO will assess the situation within 48 hours, providing immediate support to the affected individuals. The CSO will also interview involved parties and witnesses to better understand the situation.
5. *Action Steps and Escalation*
Minor issues will be resolved within the club through mediation and support. However, if an issue requires further action, the following steps will be taken:
 - Coaching Staff Involvement: If necessary, the coach or team manager will be notified to ensure bullying behaviors are immediately addressed within the team setting.
 - Consulting Authorities: In severe cases, especially those involving harassment or physical aggression, the CSO will consult local law enforcement to ensure safety and compliance with local laws.
6. *Ensuring Prompt Action*
Following Canada Soccer's Guide to Safety, every effort will be made to handle complaints promptly to ensure accurate recollection of events and timely intervention. This helps stop any ongoing bullying and provides relief to the affected parties as soon as possible.
7. *Continuous Support and Monitoring*
The CSO will continue to monitor and check in with individuals involved to ensure no recurrence of bullying and that all affected individuals feel supported within the club.
8. *Training and Education*
ICSF Columbus FC will conduct annual anti-bullying workshops for coaches, players, and parents to build a safe, inclusive, and respectful club culture.

ICSF Columbus FC – Anti-Bullying and Conflict Resolution Policy

ICSF Columbus FC is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all players, coaches, staff, and families. Bullying of any kind—whether physical, verbal, social, or online—will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

The Club prioritizes the safety and well-being of all participants both on and off the field and is committed to addressing all concerns promptly, fairly, and confidentially.

Reporting

Any witnessed or suspected incidents of bullying must be reported immediately to a Club Official, including the Executive Director at ed@icsf.ca.

- Reports may be made by players, parents/guardians, coaches, or staff.
- All reports will be taken seriously and handled in a timely and confidential manner.

Response and Investigation

Upon receiving a report, the Club will:

- Assign a designated Club Official to act as the primary point of contact
- Conduct a prompt, fair, and impartial review of the situation
- Maintain confidentiality to the extent possible while ensuring a thorough process
- Document the incident and any actions taken

Communication and Resolution

- Parents/guardians of all individuals involved will be informed, where appropriate
- The designated Club Official may facilitate a mediated discussion between the parties involved, where suitable
- All participants will be reminded of the Club's Code of Conduct and Anti-Bullying expectations

Disciplinary Action

Where bullying is substantiated, the Club may impose disciplinary measures, including but not limited to:

- Verbal or written warnings
- Temporary suspension from training or games
- Removal from team activities
- Termination of participation with the Club

Disciplinary decisions will be made based on the severity, frequency, and nature of the conduct.

Ongoing Monitoring

The Club will monitor situations where concerns have been raised to ensure that:

- The behaviour has ceased
- No retaliation occurs

- A positive and respectful environment is maintained

Commitment to Safe Sport

ICSF Columbus FC supports the principles of Safe Sport as outlined by Canada Soccer and BC Soccer and is committed to fostering a culture of respect, inclusion, and accountability at all levels of the game.