



Devils Youth Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Policy

The physical, emotional, and psychological health of every member of our community is our highest priority and we are committed to providing a safe environment for our players and families. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in the New Jersey Devils Youth Hockey Club.

Our vision is to create an environment of mutual respect and teamwork where bullying is rare. Club leadership will model the attitudes and behaviors we expect to see from our players and families. We abide by USA Hockey policies and procedures which are designed to protect our players. If bullying does occur, all Club members should feel comfortable sharing that information with Club management. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, manager, or member of the Club's leadership team. We rely upon all Club members to help maintain an environment of safety for our players.

What is Bullying?

New Jersey anti-bullying laws and regulations include the following definitions of harassment, intimidation and bullying:

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

- a. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property;
- b. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
- c. creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.”

N.J. Stat. § 18A:37-14 (2011)



Types of Bullying

- Physical – The most obvious type of bullying, where children use physical actions to gain power and control over their victims
- Verbal – The use of words, statements, and name-calling to gain power and control over a target; this type of bullying can be difficult to identify because attacks almost always occur when adults aren't around
- Relational/Emotional – A type of social manipulation where children try to hurt their peers by sabotaging their social standing; this type of bullying is more common with girls than boys
- Cyberbullying – The use of the Internet, a smartphone, or other technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person
- Sexual – The use of repeated, harmful, and humiliating actions that target a person sexually
- Prejudicial – Bullying based on prejudices that children have toward people of different races, religions, or sexual orientations

Types of Bullies

- Bully Victims – Children who have been bullied often bully others to gain a sense of power and control in their lives
- Popular Bullies – Children who have big egos and a group of supporters; these bullies have a sense of entitlement and thrive on the power and control they have over their victims
- Relational Bullies – Children who gain a feeling of power by deciding who is accepted and who is not; these bullies often target others because of jealousy and maintain their power by using rumors, gossip, labels, and name-calling
- Serial Bullies – Children who appear sweet, charming, and charismatic to authority figures but can be cold and calculating on the inside; these bullies are master manipulators who inflict emotional pain on their victims over time
- Group Bullies – Children who have a pack mentality and behave differently together than they do when they are alone; these bullies belong to cliques and imitate the leader of the group
- Indifferent Bullies – Children who are unable to feel empathy and show no remorse; these bullies enjoy seeing another person suffer and are not deterred by disciplinary actions



What is the Difference Between Conflict and Bullying?

Bullying is different from conflict, and not all conflict is bullying. *Conflict* is a disagreement or argument in which both sides express their views, whereas *bullying* is negative behavior intended to exert power and control over another person.

Bullying is done with a goal to hurt, harm, or humiliate. With bullying, there is often a power imbalance between those involved, with power defined as elevated social status, physical size, or group membership. Bullies perceive their target as vulnerable in some way and often find satisfaction in harming them, and they continue their behavior even when they know it is hurtful.

In normal conflict, children self-monitor their behavior. They read cues to know if lines are crossed, and then modify their behavior in response. Children guided by empathy usually realize they have hurt someone and will want to stop their negative behavior. Some children need guidance from adults in order to recognize the impact their behavior is having on others, but once they understand they adjust accordingly.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Everyone has the right to feel safe and to be treated with respect. Children who are bullied can experience negative physical, academic, and mental health issues. The New Jersey Devils Youth Hockey Club will take all reasonable actions to respond promptly and in a manner it deems appropriate to instances of bullying.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Adults should be aware of these possible signs that a child is being bullied:

- Does not want to attend team functions
- Begs for parents to attend practices and games
- Changes their usual routine
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide
- Runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep
- Has nightmares
- Feels ill before team functions
- Begins to do poorly in school

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- Comes home with damaged belongings
- Has possessions “go missing”
- Asks for money or starts stealing money
- Loses money
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive, or unreasonable
- Bullies other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is afraid to tell you what is wrong
- Gives improbable excuses
- Is afraid to use the Internet or smartphone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber-message is received

Note that these symptoms could indicate other problems or could be normal adolescent behavior, but parents who observe these signs in their children should consider bullying as a possible explanation and investigate further.

If You Suspect that Your Child is Being Bullied:

- Report your concerns to your coach or team manager.
- Your team leaders may seek to involve Club management in finding a resolution to the situation.
- Please note that Club management, administrators, coaches, and managers are not educators or mental health professionals, and we do not have the training, expertise, and resources to address bullying in the way that schools do. We take our players’ health and safety very seriously and will do our best to address the situation, and we may call upon the expertise of others if we feel that we are unable to deal with the situation adequately.

Club Response to Reports of Bullying

- The bullying behavior will be thoroughly investigated, and an attempt will be made to help the bully/bullies adjust their behavior.
- We have Zero Tolerance for racial, ethnic, religious, sexual, homophobic, and ableist slurs or name-calling of any kind. Players using discriminatory language will be disciplined immediately.
- Our ultimate goal is for players to learn the skills of self-advocacy, leadership, teamwork, and responsibility. In most cases, we will encourage the players to reach a resolution to the problem among themselves while offering support as necessary and appropriate.

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- If this approach is not successful or appropriate, Club personnel will meet with players and/or parents to seek an amicable solution. Club personnel may include coaches, team managers, Club management, and/or Board members. Player meetings must include at least two unrelated adults. When appropriate, minutes of the meeting should be taken and signed by all attendees.
- If the steps above are not sufficient to stop the bullying behavior, the offenders will be subject to disciplinary action including, but not limited to, temporary or permanent suspension and the filing of a SafeSport complaint with USA Hockey.
- In many cases, parents do not want action taken against bullies for fear of retribution or embarrassment. We do not want to discourage parents from reporting incidences of bullying to the appropriate Club personnel, and we understand and respect these very legitimate concerns. We will respect parents' wishes whenever possible, but the safety of our players is our top priority. We will handle these situations discreetly and we will work with parents and players to find an acceptable solution while protecting the victims to the greatest degree possible.

Bullying Away from the Rink

It is particularly tricky for the Club to address bullying that occurs away from the rink (particularly cyberbullying). On the one hand, we believe it is our responsibility to promote kindness, respect, and community among all our players at all times; on the other hand, we have little to no control over our players' conduct when they are not under our supervision. We will do our best to address inappropriate behavior among our players wherever it occurs, but we rely heavily on parents to help us manage any issues that arise outside of formal team functions.

Prevention

- Our Anti-Bullying Policy will be posted on our website so all Club members are aware of our expectations regarding player behavior and the potential consequences of failure to meet these expectations.
- Our staff, coaches, managers, and Board members will model the kind of teamwork and respectful behavior we expect to see from our parents and players. We will work to create a self-policing culture where bullying is simply not tolerated.
- If you see or hear something, say something. We encourage every member of our community to advocate for our players and speak up if they witness any inappropriate behavior. All parents and staff members should feel comfortable addressing players who say or do something unkind.
- We will be open to discussions about player behavior and bullying and will be available to any parent who has concerns or questions.



Resources

Cornwall Sports Partnership. *Anti-Bullying Policy for Sports Clubs. Anti-Bullying Policy for Sports Clubs.* http://www.cornwallsportspartnership.co.uk/files/anti_bullying_policy.pdf

“Effects of Bullying.” *StopBullying.gov*, Department of Health and Human Services, 12 Sept. 2017, www.stopbullying.gov/at-risk/effects/index.html.

Gordon, Sherri. “6 Types of Bullying Parents Should Know About.” *Verywell Family*, Verywellfamily, 14 Nov. 2018, www.verywellfamily.com/types-of-bullying-parents-should-know-about-4153882.

Gordon, Sherri. “Here Is How You Can Tell the Difference Between Conflict and Bullying.” *Verywell Family*, Verywellfamily, 29 Jan. 2018, www.verywellfamily.com/conflict-and-bullying-difference-460495.

“New Jersey Anti-Bullying Laws & Policies.” *StopBullying.gov*, Department of Health and Human Services, 22 June 2017, www.stopbullying.gov/laws/new-jersey/index.html.

“USA Hockey SafeSport Program.” *USA Hockey SafeSport*, USA Hockey, www.usahockey.com/safesportprogram.

“What's the Difference between Conflict and Bullying?” *Bullying Statistics - National Bullying Prevention Center*, www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/questions-answered/conflict-vs-bullying.asp.