

Belleville Minor Football League (BMFL) Abuse & Harassment Prevention Policy

1. Policy Statement

Belleville Minor Football League (BMFL) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, respectful, and developmentally appropriate environment for all participants. BMFL has zero tolerance for physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, or verbal abuse, harassment, neglect, bullying, or misconduct. All individuals share responsibility for maintaining a culture of safety and reporting concerns immediately.

2. Definitions

Physical Abuse: Intentional use of force causing potential harm, including hitting, kicking, grabbing, shaking, or unsafe physical contact.

Sexual Abuse: Any sexual behaviour toward a minor, including touching, comments, exposure, exploitation, or coercion.

Emotional Abuse: Persistent behaviour harming self-esteem, such as humiliation, threats, isolation, or excessive criticism.

Verbal Abuse: Swearing at, insulting, taunting, or demeaning a person.

Psychological Abuse: Intimidation, manipulation, discrimination, or behaviour causing fear.

Harassment: Unwelcome conduct—verbal, physical, written, or digital—that demeans, intimidates, or humiliates.

Neglect: Failure to provide proper supervision, safety, or support to a minor.

3. Governing Legislation

This policy is informed by: Child, Youth and Family Services Act; Ontario Human Rights Code; Criminal Code of Canada; Ontario Safe Sport Guidelines; Football Ontario Safe Sport Framework; Football Canada UCCMS.

4. Who Is Covered

This policy applies to all players, parents, coaches, volunteers, officials, board members, contractors, and spectators involved in BMFL activities.

5. Abuse Reporting Procedures

Reports may be directed to the BMFL Commissioner, Safe Sport Officer, any Board Member, or a Head Coach. Mandatory reporting to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) applies when a child may be in need of protection.

6. Reporting Protocol

1. Ensure immediate safety of affected individuals.
2. Contact emergency services if required.
3. Report suspected abuse to CAS.
4. Notify the Commissioner and Safe Sport Officer.
5. Document observations and preserve evidence.

7. Investigative & Disciplinary Procedures

BMFL may temporarily suspend or reassign the alleged individual during investigation. Investigations may involve BMFL personnel, third-party investigators, Football Ontario, or law enforcement. Possible outcomes include training, warnings, suspension, dismissal, or legal reporting. Good-faith reports are protected; knowingly false allegations may result in discipline.

8. Access to the Policy

All individuals must receive the policy, be able to ask questions, and receive clarification when needed.

9. Personal Financial Liability

Individuals may face personal civil or criminal liability if they fail to follow abuse laws, reporting requirements, or this policy.

10. Policy Acknowledgement

All staff, volunteers, and coaches must sign an annual acknowledgement agreeing to follow the BMFL Abuse & Harassment Policy.

11. Responsibility for Implementation

Implementation responsibilities belong to the BMFL Commissioner, Safe Sport Officer, and the BMFL Board of Directors.

12. Media Representative

BMFL will appoint a Media Representative. Only the Media Representative or Commissioner may speak publicly regarding incidents or investigations.