



TASA Minor Hockey Association

Complaint & Conflict Resolution Process

TASA MHA is committed to creating a healthy, fair and efficient environment for resolving conflict and will endeavour to solve any dispute that arises as fairly as possible. Please note that this will involve assessing and understanding the context of the situation and individual(s) involved thus it may not seem equal; TASA will strive for fairness. Any process for resolution within our MHA will have oversight by applicable policies as set forth by Hockey NS and Hockey Canada.

The TASA MHA Complaint & Conflict Resolution Process guides the handling of all complaints related to bullying, harassment, abuse and code of conduct issues, as defined in the Index of Terms that is attached to this policy. This process outlines the process for resolution of situations of conflict/complaint, including steps to promote the concern to the TASA Executive and/or the TASA Discipline Committee. Promotion of the concern may be to inform the TASA Executive and/or as an indication that the conflict has not been resolved to the satisfaction of parties involved. This process is meant to address conflict/complaints that involves TASA members, specifically, conflict between parents, coaches, Executive members and volunteers. This process may also be applied for conflict between players and players/coaches.

TASA will have a Discipline Committee to assist Executive members in dealing with behavior and conflict issues of its membership (players, volunteers and parents) as well to offer assistance in addressing complaints/concerns brought forward by TASA members. **The Discipline Committee** will consist of a combination of TASA Executive Members and Member(s)-at-Large from the TASA membership; this committee will be chaired by the VP Risk Management. In instances of conflict of interest involving members of the Discipline Committee, that member(s) shall be excluded from the oversight and/or mediation of the conflict and shall participate in the role of **complainant** (person(s) bringing forward the complaint/concern) or **respondent** (person(s) the complaint/concern is about and who will be invited to respond). The Process and Protocols for bringing forward concerns/complaints to the TASA Disciplinary Committee are outlined below.

The Discipline Committee will focus on areas of complaint that involve the following:

1. Violations to the TASA Code of Conduct, or violations to codes of conduct as defined by Hockey Nova Scotia and Hockey Canada;
2. Concerns that may be defined as abusive and involve officials (on-ice and off-ice), coaches, volunteers, players or other parents, fans, or community members;
3. Behaviors that may be defined or perceived to fall outside of the TASA Code of Conduct, for example, bullying, harassing etc.

Please note that issues related to player placement (tryouts/evaluations), ice-time, shift length or game/bench management by coaches and/or officials may not be entertained by the Discipline Committee.

Conflict & Complaint Process for TASA Minor Hockey Association (MHA)

The process for any complaint or conflict regarding teams or team staff or individuals under the jurisdiction of TASA Minor Hockey is to follow the procedures and policies as outlined in the TASA Behavior Policy and the Progressive Discipline Policy.

The process for complaints and conflicts is outlined below:

1. **Team Level Discussion:** If you have a complaint that you wish to forward or if there is a conflict with another parent or with the coaching staff of a particular team within TASA MHA, you must wait 24 hours and then bring your concern/issue forward to your team manager in a respectful manner. Options to communicate your concern include, but are not limited to: in person (verbally) or via email.
 - a. If your concern directly relates to the role of the team manager or head coach, please move directly to level 2 and forward your concern(s) directly to your respective VP (IP/Novice, Recreation, Female or Competitive).
 - b. If the outcome has been resolved at the team level, there may not be a need to elevate it to level 2; it may be worthwhile to inform your respective VP that the conflict has been resolved; this may be communicated by the team manager or head coach
 - c. If the outcome is not satisfactory to either party, then the concern should be elevated to level 2 (VP). The concern should be brought to the attention of the respective VP (IP/Novice, Recreation, Female or Competitive) via email.

2. **VP Level:** Issues that are not resolved at the team level, to the satisfaction to all involved, should be brought to the attention of the respective VP (IP/Novice, Recreation, Female or Competitive) in writing via email and/or by a written letter. If the notice is forwarded via email, it should be cc'd to the President of TASA. The VP will review the concern/complaint and follow up with the team staff and/or others involved as applicable. The VP will mediate a discussion and/or clarify expectations for a resolution moving forward. The VP may also address coaching styles as applicable to correct concerning behavior; or offer insight to parents/non-coaches on the coaching philosophy for TASA. The VP may consult, as applicable with the VP Risk Management and/or Technical Director.
 - a. If the outcome has been resolved at the VP level, there may not be a need to elevate it to level 3; it may be worthwhile to inform the VP Risk Management that the conflict has been resolved; this may be communicated by the respective VP (IP/Novice, Recreation, Female or Competitive)
 - b. If the outcome is not satisfactory to either party, then the concern should be elevated to level 3 (Executive level). The concern should be brought to the

attention to the VP Risk Management by completing the Complaints & Concerns Form (found on the TASA website). Concerns and complaints will only be accepted by completing this form and will not be accepted verbally.

3. **Executive Level:** If the response in steps 1 & 2 does not provide resolution to the issue/concern, or if the concerning behaviors linger and/or re-occur, the complaint/concern must be submitted in writing to the VP Risk Management. The VP Risk Management will consult with the applicable VP (IP/Novice, Recreation, Female or Competitive) and/or TASA Technical Director (as applicable) and/or engage with the Resolution and Discipline Committee. The head coach/manager for the team may also be consulted to ensure they are aware of the concern and any outcomes at the team level (from step 1 & 2).
 - a. **Investigation:** The Discipline Committee may initiate an investigation that may include, but is not limited to the following: verbal discussions with complainant and respondent; verbal discussions with other relevant persons and/or persons with insight into the complaint/concern. Investigation may also include written information from complainant and respondent; verbal discussions with other relevant persons and/or persons with insight into the complaint/concern. Investigation may involve in person or over the phone meetings, discussions, and/or mediation sessions individually or as a group, as applicable and as best fits the situation. Communication throughout the investigation may remain in writing (via email) if this is applicable.
 - b. The Discipline Committee will recommend outcomes to the TASA Executive prior to releasing any decisions.
 - c. The Discipline Committee will offer a response in writing to those involved; this may also include the head coach of the team in question, if applicable. The outcome from the Discipline Committee will provide clear direction on the expectations that need to be adhered to, pursuant to any and all policies of TASA MHA and Hockey Nova Scotia. The timeframe for this response may vary, depending on the concerns and time it takes to gather information; the Discipline Committee will make efforts to expedite the process to avoid unnecessary delays.
 - d. Responses will follow the Progressive Discipline Policy as included in the TASA Policy Manual and may include, but are not limited to, any of the following:
 - i. Dismissal of the complaint with no recommendations for accountability;
 - ii. Recommendations to complainant and/or respondent and/or other relevant person(s)
 - iii. Accountability for complainant and/or respondent via verbal notice and/or written notice;
 - iv. Suspension;
 - v. Request to HNS for further and more severe sanctions, including suspension for a significant amount of time and/or revocation of membership from TASA;

- vi. or any other fair and reasonable process for accountability, as determined by the Discipline Committee.
 - e. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome from the Discipline Committee, the complainant may forward their concern, in writing, to Hockey Nova Scotia (HNS). The process for forwarding complaints to Hockey Nova Scotia is found on their website.
 - i. If a concern is brought forward to HNS, it will no longer be addressed by TASA, unless requested by HNS.
 - ii. Should a member decide to bring legal action against TASA before observing their right of appeal offered by this process, it shall be understood that the complainant will have relinquished all playing or participation rights until such action has been resolved.
4. **Concerns involving persons/teams outside of TASA:** If the concern involves an individual, team or team staff that falls outside of the jurisdiction of TASA (e.g. from another association), the team manager can pass along the concern, in writing, to their VP (IP/Novice, Recreation, Female or Competitive) for follow up. TASA will not be actively engaged in the disciplinary proceedings of other MHA's
5. Discipline Committee will only address concerns that are brought forward following this process. Concerns that do not follow this process may be excluded from review by the Discipline Committee.

INDEX OF TERMS & DEFINITIONS

1. **Abuse:** Abuse may include any behavior towards an individual that is hurtful or harmful, from another person (may or may not be a person in a position of trust, dependence, or power). In instances of suspected abuse relating to a minor, all volunteers/adults have a legal duty to report to authorities (child welfare). This is a PROTECTION issue. Abuse may be defined under the following areas:
- a. **Emotional:** A chronic attack on a child's self-esteem that is psychologically damaging by a person in a position of power, authority or trust (terrorizing, degrading and rejecting). This does NOT include accountability for behavior such as benching a player for disciplinary reasons, cutting a player after tryouts, refusing to transfer a player, or limiting ice time.
 - b. **Physical:** When a person in a position of power or trust purposefully injures or threatens. This can include: slapping, hitting, shaking, kicking, pulling hair or ears, striking, shoving, grabbing, hazing (humiliating and degrading initiation rite in which a player is forced to participate in order to be accepted), or excessive exercise as a form of punishment.
 - c. **Neglect:** Chronic inattention to the basic necessities of life (this may occur in hockey when injuries are not adequately treated, players are made to play with injuries, equipment is inadequate or unsafe, or road trips not properly supervised).
 - d. **Sexual:** When an older child, adolescent or adult for his or her own sexual stimulation or gratification, uses a young person. There are two categories:
 - i. **Contact:** touched or fondled in sexual areas

- ii. **Non-Contact:** Obscene calls, remarks on a computer, cell phone or in notes and any form of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, etc., sexually intrusive questions or comments, indecent exposure.
- 2. **Bullying:** Intentionally hurting someone in order to insult, humiliate, degrade or exclude him or her.
 - a. Physical examples include: hitting, kicking, grabbing, shoving, spitting on, beating others up, damaging or stealing personal property.
 - b. Verbal examples include: name-calling, hurtful teasing, humiliating, threatening someone, degrading behaviours, over the phone or in person, through text messaging or chat rooms.
 - c. Relational examples include: making others look foolish, excluding peers, spreading gossip or rumours (may happen in person, over the phone or computer).
- 3. **Harassment:** Offensive behaviour, emotional, physical and/or sexual that involves discrimination against a person because of their race, national or ethnic origin, age, colour, religion, family status, sexual orientation, sex/gender, disability, marital status, or pardoned conviction. This could be behavior that occurs as a single event or a pattern of mistreatment; it may be directed at an individual or group. Harassment occurs when someone attempts to negatively control, influence or embarrass another person, with malicious intent.
- 4. **Expectations for Behavior / Code of Conduct:** All members of TASA are expected to abide by and uphold the Code of Conduct (see the TASA website for more details). Members of TASA include all parents, players, family members of players, coaches, volunteers. We expect that all members will conduct themselves in a manner that appreciates the time commitment of the volunteers that are necessary for TASA to operate as well as understanding that remaining calm and respectful are important factors to work through any situation of conflict.