



American Special Hockey Association I.D.E.A. Commitment **Inclusion * Diversity * Equity * Accessibility**

The American Special Hockey Association cares about our ASHA Member Clubs, Coaches, Volunteers, Athletes, families and communities. Our member's safety, health and well-being ensures a positive accessible experience with the sport of hockey and the larger hockey community.

It is our call to action to stop all incidents of "hate" immediately.

The American Special Hockey Association has ZERO Tolerance for ableism, racism, sexism, harassment, or hate of any kind. We believe in this because the American Special Hockey Association exists to welcome and include everyone to the sport of hockey, free of judgment on race, color, sex, sexual orientation or preference, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, creed, citizenship status, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, medical conditions including, but not limited to genetic characteristics, intellectual or physical disability, and veteran status.

As part of our zero tolerance policy, ASHA participants will be held accountable for their words and actions as well as required to report any derogatory statements or acts that they observe and can reasonably understand as being problematic.

This policy applies to: all players, coaches, officials, volunteers, and spectators who attend our events.

If you have been subject to hate speech or discriminatory actions that violate our policy: You will be heard, and taken seriously. You should confidentially report directly to your ASHA Member Club Head Coach. If you are not comfortable with speaking to your ASHA Member Club Head Coach, please tell a Board Member of your ASHA Member Club and that adult will inform your Head Coach or ASHA Regional Director/ASHA Executive Director who will need to speak with you.

If you are found in violation of the policy: There will be disciplinary consequences including suspension or expulsion from all ASHA Programs, or referred to local law enforcement.

If you observe hateful action you are expected to Report: You can do this by 1) Notice the event 2) Interpret the event as a problem — investigate! 3) Assume personal responsibility. 4) Know how to help (read the attached policy and resources). 5) Implement the help and provide support.

If you observe hateful action but chose not help or report: There will be disciplinary consequences including suspension or expulsion from all ASHA Programs, or referred to local law enforcement.

To better our communications and expectations, we have developed the attached Zero Tolerance Policies Harassment, Discrimination & Bullying. We recognize that policies alone will not solve the larger societal problems, so we expect every member of ASHA to reflect upon their responsibilities to ensure that every person feels welcome and safe in the sport of hockey.

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Resources & Definitions

There are a number of great resources for ASHA Members to access to gain knowledge about how racism, ableism and acts of hate impact our lives both passively and aggressively. We encourage every member to reach out and gain knowledge, before lashing out in frustration, when faced with acts of hate and discrimination. To be truly welcoming, the American Special Hockey Association, and its members, must be willing to set an example of what Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility can be like in the sport of hockey.

Bystander Training Knowing when and how to step up when you observe a hateful action can be hard. For more information about Bystander Training: visit <https://stepupprogram.org> Here are some great strategies to know when, and how, to help! <https://stepupprogram.org/students/strategies-for-effective-helping/>

Ableism is the discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. At its heart, ableism is rooted in the assumption that disabled people require 'fixing' and defines people by their disability. Like racism and sexism, ableism classifies entire groups of people as 'less than,' and includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalizations of people with disabilities.

The American Special Hockey Association encourages ASHA Members to contact <https://www.accessliving.org/newsroom/blog/ableism-101/> to learn more about Ableism

Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices. Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination.

Racist = One who is supporting a racist policy through their actions or interaction or expressing a racist idea;
Racism = race prejudice + social and institutional power; Racism = a system of advantage based on race;
Racism = a system of oppression based on race; Racism = a white supremacy system

The American Special Hockey Association encourages ASHA Members to contact <https://www.racialequitytools.org/> to learn more about Racism

Hate Speech: Hate speech/language is any use of slurs or derogatory terms or language which includes (but not limited to) hurtful or negative references about: race, color, sex, sexual orientation or preference, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, creed, citizenship status, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, medical conditions including, but not limited to genetic characteristics, intellectual or physical disability, and veteran status.

The American Special Hockey Association encourages ASHA Members to contact [Players Against Hate](https://playersagainsthate.org/) if racism has impacted your youth hockey player. <https://playersagainsthate.org/>

Active & Passive Racism & Ableism Examples

- When we laugh (or stay silent) when a racist joke is told, we are passively racist.
- When we don't ensure that a facility is accessible for persons with physical or sensory disabilities, we are being discriminatory towards persons with disabilities. (Or we assume that one disability represents all disabilities.)
- When we say nothing about persons of color being absent from our activities or not included in professional hockey, we passively uphold racism.
- When we say nothing when someone uses the word "Retarded" or speaks over a person with disability as if they were not there.

ACTive Allyship

An ally is any person that actively promotes and aspires to advance the culture of inclusion through intentional, positive and conscious efforts that benefit people as a whole. Allyship is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people. To be allies, words and action must be in sync. Words without actions are detrimental and work against changing the culture in hockey. To be a true ally, you should:

- Lift others up by advocating,
- Share growth opportunities with others,
- Not view venting as a personal attack,
- Recognize systematic inequalities and realize impact of micro-aggressions,
- Believe underrepresented people's experiences, and
- Most importantly – listen, support, self-reflect & change.



American Special Hockey Association

Action Plan and Zero Tolerance Policies on Harassment, Discrimination & Bullying

Coach/Volunteer/Athlete Responsibilities

IF YOU HAVE experienced or observed ableism, hate, racism, sexism, anti-semitism, homophobia, bullying, or harassment in any form*, it is the responsibility of your Head Coach (or Board Member) to gather as many facts as possible, which includes time of the incident, location, witnesses, and other related pieces of information that are needed to determine the next course of action. Depending upon the seriousness of the incident, your Head Coach (or Board Member), in close collaboration with the officers of your ASHA Member Club Board of Directors, will also determine if local law enforcement support is needed. Once an ASHA Member Club investigation is concluded, a number of actions can occur:

- The volunteer or athlete, who exhibited bullying or harassing behavior (policies are attached) can receive a range of disciplinary consequences including suspension or expulsion from all ASHA Programs.
- A restorative justice conversation amongst the volunteers or athletes involved will be utilized as a means to restore relationships and that is only if all parties involved are willing and want to participate in a restorative process. In some cases a restorative justice (RJ) conversation is not the appropriate option.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are always contacted and included in determining how to respond to a volunteer or athlete when they are either the victim or the individual making choices that is harming others.
- ASHA Member Club Heads Coaches work in very close collaboration with the American Special Hockey Association, and can provide resources to provide social and emotional support to volunteers and athletes.

ASHA works closely with our ASHA Member Clubs on any incidents of hate and will take serious action to hold our volunteers and athletes accountable. We believe every member of our organization is capable of treating one another with compassion and kindness.

A zero tolerance policy means that we will not tolerate hate in any form within the American Special Hockey Association or at any of our sanctioned events. Your responsibility, volunteers and athletes, is to follow the reporting expectations as noted above. What would be most expedient, is that you confidentially report directly to your ASHA Member Club Head Coach. If you are not comfortable with speaking to your ASHA Member Club Head Coach, please tell a Board Member of your ASHA Member Club and that adult will inform your Head Coach or ASHA Regional Director/ASHA Executive Director who will need to speak with you.



American Special Hockey Association

Zero Tolerance for Harassment, Discrimination & Retaliation Policy

Federal law and state law, specific to the Civil Rights Act of 1972, prohibits discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, including, but not limited to: race, color, sex, sexual orientation or preference, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, creed, citizenship status, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, medical conditions including, but not limited to genetic characteristics, intellectual or physical disability, and veteran status.

The American Special Hockey Association (ASHA) is concerned about the safety and well-being of volunteers and athletes, and is committed to providing an environment that is free from harassment, discrimination and retaliation on the basis of these protected characteristics, and any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law, ordinance or regulation.

ASHA is committed to eliminating racism and other forms of discrimination, retaliation, and harassment throughout our organizations and our membership. It is our policy that harassment, ableism, racism, homophobia and discrimination of any kind will not be tolerated. This includes all form of hate speech/language and derogatory slurs/language and exclusion of the use of safe and approved adaptive techniques and equipment in adaptive hockey programming.

To this end, ASHA strictly prohibits any and all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment (including the use of hate speech/language, sexual harassment and sexual violence), discrimination or retaliation in any form. Anyone who violates this policy of zero tolerance is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination or dismissal.

Zero Tolerance

The American Special Hockey Association strictly prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment (including the use of hate speech/language, sexual harassment and sexual violence), discrimination, the use of hate speech* or retaliation in any form. Anyone who violates this policy of zero tolerance is subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination or dismissal.

Hate Speech/Language

Hate speech/language is any use of slurs or derogatory terms or language which includes (but not limited to) hurtful or negative references about: intellectual or physical disability, race, color, sex, sexual orientation or preference, gender, gender identity, religion, national origin, creed, citizenship status, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, medical conditions including, but not limited to genetic characteristics, and veteran status.

Unlawful Discrimination Defined

Unlawful discrimination occurs when an individual's protected characteristic is used as a basis for adverse decisions affecting that individual. Prohibited discrimination includes, but is not limited to racism of any kind, sexual harassment and sexual violence. Discrimination encompasses a wide range of conduct. Examples of specifically prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Terminating an individual's participation based on a protected characteristic;
- Refusing a request based on a protected characteristic;
- Denying participation based on a protected characteristic.



Unlawful Harassment Defined

Unlawful harassment includes all forms of unwelcome verbal, physical and visual conduct and displays that are based on any of the above mentioned protected characteristics and which interfere with performance and/or create an offensive or hostile environment. Harassment can take many forms. The following are some examples that may constitute harassment:

- (a) Verbal harassment such as jokes, epithets, slurs and unwelcome remarks about an individual's race, color, ethnicity, ability or any of the protected characteristics as described above. Including body, dress, clothing, physical appearance or abilities, derogatory comments, discussions of a sexual nature and/or harassing remarks;
- (b) Physical harassment such as physical interference with normal activity, impeding or blocking movement, assault, unwelcome physical contact or touching, staring at a person's body, and threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to a protected characteristic; and
- (c) Visual harassment such as offensive or obscene e-mails, instant messaging, web blogs, photographs, calendars, posters, cards, cartoons, drawings and gestures, displays with sexually suggestive or lewd objects, unwelcome letters or notes or any other graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of the individual's protected characteristics.
 - The conduct can occur in any program or activity and can take place in or around ice rinks, or other gathering places.
 - The conduct can occur virtually through any internet communications.

Sexual Harassment Defined

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or visual, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (1) submission to such conduct is made a term or condition of participation in sports or Club activity;
- (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for participation decisions affecting the individual; or
- (3) such conduct has the effect of unreasonably interfering with a volunteer or athlete's right to participate in an environment free from discrimination, unreasonably interfering with a volunteer or athlete's participation, and creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working, educational, or living environment. Sexual harassment also includes sexual violence, which, in addition to violating this zero tolerance policy, is a crime.

Sexual harassment, including sexual violence, encompasses a wide range of conduct. Examples of specifically prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Promising, directly or indirectly, a volunteer or athlete a reward, if the volunteer or athlete complies with a sexually oriented request;
- Threatening, directly or indirectly, retaliation against a volunteer or athlete if the volunteer or athlete refuses to comply with a sexually oriented request;
- Denying, directly or indirectly, a volunteer or athlete's opportunity to participate, if the volunteer or athlete to comply with a sexually oriented request;
- Engaging in sexually suggestive conversation or physical contact or touching a volunteer or athlete;
- Displaying pornographic or sexually oriented materials; Telling sexual or "dirty" jokes; Engaging



- in indecent exposure; Making unwanted sexual or romantic advances toward a student; Spreading
- sexual rumors or rating other volunteer or athlete as to sexual activity or performance; or
- Physical conduct such as assault, touching, or blocking normal movement. The conduct can occur in any ASHA sanctioned activities.

Formal Complaint Procedure and Investigations

It is the responsibility of each individual to assure that prohibited harassment, discrimination or retaliation does not occur within the ASHA community. If anyone believes that he/she is being harassed, discriminated or retaliated against, that individual shall immediately report the facts of the incident(s) and the name(s) of the party(s) involved to one of the following (as appropriate): Local authorities, U.S. Center for Safe Sport, ASHA Member Club Head Coach, ASHA Member Club Manager, then ONLY if required, ASHA Regional Director, ASHA Executive Director, ASHA Board President. The reporting individual is strongly encouraged to put the report in writing and include relevant facts, dates and witnesses.

The reporting individual may be asked whether they want to attempt an informal resolution, or whether they want to initiate a formal complaint under the policy. All formal complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation made against any volunteer or athlete or third party will immediately be investigated by (as appropriate)): Local authorities, U.S. Center for Safe Sport, the ASHA Member Club, or their designee (ASHA Regional or Executive Director, ONLY if required), and investigations will be conducted in a discreet manner. Investigations will include interviews of the complaining party, the accused party, and others as appropriate. Such interviews will be aimed at providing both parties an opportunity to present evidence and explain his or her version of the events. Information obtained from the investigation will be disclosed only on a need-to-know basis.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the ASHA Member Club will determine whether, based upon a preponderance of the evidence, unlawful harassment, discrimination or retaliation has occurred and will communicate its findings in writing to the accused and the complainant. When appropriate and lawful, the ASHA Member Club will communicate its findings to other persons who are directly concerned.

Absent unforeseen circumstances, investigations will be conducted and completed within 60 days from the date a formal complaint is made to any of the foregoing grievance officers. The ASHA Member Club (or ASHA ONLY if required) will provide notice of the outcome, as described above, within 15 days from the date of the conclusion of the investigation. The American Special Hockey Association retains the right to extend these deadlines as necessary to ensure a thorough investigation. Any member of the ASHA community who is determined to have violated this zero tolerance policy will be subject to appropriate discipline, up to and including immediate termination or dismissal. Steps will be taken as necessary to prevent any further harassment, discrimination or retaliation.

The American Special Hockey Association takes all complaints of harassment, discrimination and retaliation seriously and wants the opportunity to internally resolve any problems that may arise. No individual will be retaliated against or otherwise disciplined for reporting in good faith an incident of harassment, discrimination or retaliation or for participating in an investigation. The reporting individual and all parties participating in an investigation have the assurance of ASHA that no reprisals will be taken as the result of the complaint, unless the complaint was filed in bad faith or for an improper purpose. If any individual feels he/she has been retaliated against, he/she should immediately report the retaliatory conduct.



American Special Hockey Association

Zero Tolerance for Policy for Bullying & Bully Prevention

The American Special Hockey Association (ASHA) believes that all volunteers/athletes have a right to a safe and healthy environment. ASHA Member Clubs have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

ASHA and ASHA Member Clubs will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any volunteer/athlete. ASHA Members (Staff, Volunteers or Athletes) shall not intimidate, harass, or bully another member through words or actions. Such behavior includes: use of hate speech, or demeaning language, direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation.

ASHA expects volunteers/athletes and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to their local ASHA Member Club Leadership or ASHA Regional/Executive Director. Any Coach or volunteer who witness such acts take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to volunteers/athletes during ASHA sanctioned activities.

To ensure bullying does not occur during ASHA activities, ASHA will cultivate acceptance and understanding in all volunteers/athletes and staff to build ASHA's capacity to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment

ASHA Head Coaches should discuss this policy with their volunteers/athletes in cognitive and age-appropriate ways and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Volunteers/athletes who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from ASHA.

Each ASHA Member Club will adopt a Coach/Volunteer/Athlete Code of Conduct to be followed by every ASHA Member.

The Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Any volunteer/athlete who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Volunteers/athletes are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the ASHA Member Club Head Coach or designee.
- Volunteers/athletes can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.
- If the complainant volunteer/athlete or the parent of the volunteer/athlete feels that appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached, the volunteer/athlete or the parent/guardian of the volunteer/athlete should contact the ASHA Regional Director/Executive Director. ASHA strictly prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, volunteers/athletes and their parents/guardians will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting intimidation and bullying: at the beginning of the hockey season, as part of the volunteer/athlete handbook and/or information packet, as part of new volunteer/athlete orientation, and as part of the ASHA Member Club's notification to parents/guardians.
- All ASHA Member Clubs will make reasonable efforts to keep a report of bullying and the results of investigation confidential.
- ASHA Member Coaching Staff and Volunteers who witness acts of bullying shall take immediate steps to intervene when safe to do so. People witnessing or experiencing bullying are strongly encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the target or witnesses in any way.



Conflict Resolution

The American Special Hockey Association believes that all volunteers/athletes have a right to a safe and healthy environment. Part of a healthy environment is the freedom to openly disagree. With this freedom comes the responsibility to discuss and resolve disagreements with respect for the rights and opinions of others.

To prevent conflict, each ASHA member Club is strongly encouraged to incorporate conflict resolution and problem solving into its coaching programs. This is an important step in promoting respect and acceptance, developing new ways of communicating, understanding, and accepting differing values and cultures within the special hockey community and helps ensure a safe and healthy environment

The Volunteer/athlete Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Volunteers/athletes are to resolve their disputes without resorting to violence.
- Volunteers/athletes, especially those trained in conflict resolution and peer mediation, are encouraged to help fellow volunteers/athletes resolve problems peaceably.
- Volunteers/athletes can rely on staff trained in conflict resolution and peer mediation strategies to intervene in any dispute likely to result in violence.
- Volunteers/athletes needing help in resolving a disagreement, or volunteers/athletes observing conflict may contact ASHA Staff for resources.
- Volunteers/athletes involved in a dispute will be referred to their ASHA Club Head Coach or ASHA Member Club Board of Directors, who will keep the discussions confidential.
- Conflict resolution procedures shall not supplant the authority of ASHA Member Club or facility staff to act to prevent violence, ensure safety, maintain order, and discipline volunteers/athletes.

