



HARASSMENT POLICY

EFFECTIVE JUNE 10, 2024

1. Introduction

The Ontario Cheerleading Federation is committed to providing a sport and work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, with equal opportunities for all and without any discriminatory practices. This policy describes this commitment and provides the mechanism for the Ontario Cheerleading Federation to deal with harassment and abuse issues quickly, responsively and effectively.

The Ontario Cheerleading Federation has a responsibility to its membership, in particular but not limited to its youth and female members, to provide measures to prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment in the sport context.

The existence of a policy raises awareness of harassment and abuse issues and sends a strong message to members of the Ontario Cheerleading Federation that harassment and abuse will not be tolerated.

2. Policy Details

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, directors, officers, coaches, athletes, officials, volunteers and members of the Ontario Cheerleading Federation. The OCF encourages reporting of all incidents of harassment, regardless of who may be the offender.

Standard of Conduct

Individuals associated with the Ontario Cheerleading Federation will refrain from any behaviour that may constitute harassment. Harassment is defined as conduct, gestures or comments which are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, malicious, degrading or otherwise offensive to an individual or group of individuals and which create a hostile or intimidating environment for work or sports activities, or which negatively affect performance or work. Included in the definition of harassment herein are all forms of discrimination prohibited by human rights legislation which provides that no person shall discriminate against any other person on such grounds as race, ethnicity, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, disability or conviction for which a pardon has been granted. Coaches in particular must avoid any behaviour that abuses the power imbalance inherent in their position relative to the athlete.

Reporting an Infraction

Any individual may report to a person in authority (coach, official, a Director or the President of the OCF) a complaint of alleged harassment. Minor infractions that are not considered serious by the complainant or the person to whom they are initially reported may be dealt with summarily by an appropriate person, such as a coach or official, having authority over the member whose conduct is being reported. All complaints of a more serious nature should be in writing and forwarded to the President who will bring them to the attention of the Harassment Officer and/or the Governance Committee. An accused will be informed immediately that a complaint has been made against him or her.

Harassment Officer

This individual is appointed by the Board of Directors. He/she: acts as a contact person for the complainant; provides moral support but does not mediate or resolve the complaint; and oversees the resolution process.

Gathering Facts about the Complaint

In order to ascertain how to deal with the complaint it will be necessary for statements to be obtained from the complainant and the accused and any relevant witnesses. A fact finder will be appointed to obtain these statements, interview witnesses and prepare a summary of the facts for the Governance Committee. The report will identify any issues or conflicting statements.

Hearing

Based on the report of the facts of the case, the Harassment Officer and/or the Governance Committee will determine whether the matter is sufficiently minor that it can be dealt with summarily, without a hearing, as no disciplinary action deemed necessary, or of such importance that a hearing should be convened to deal with the complaint. Very serious cases may require assistance and advice from outside legal or human rights professionals.

Once it is decided how the matter is to be dealt with the appropriate steps will be taken to deal with the complaint summarily, or to deal with the complaint in the manner set out in the Ontario Cheerleading Federation Discipline and Complaints Policy

Imposing Disciplinary Sanctions

If there is a guilty finding from the hearing, the matter will be dealt with in line with the Association's Discipline and Complaints Policy.

3. Additional information

Human Rights

Notwithstanding this policy, every person who experiences harassment continues to have the right to seek assistance from the Ontario Human Rights Commission, even when steps are being taken under this policy.

Minors

Any allegation of emotional, physical or sexual abuse or neglect involving a minor will be reported to the Child Protection Authorities or the police. The parents or guardians of any minors should be present during interviews with the minor, but not participate in them.

Anonymous Complaints

The Ontario Cheerleading Federation will not ignore anonymous complaints and will investigate the complaint if the organization sees such as a potential problem.

Reluctant Complainant

Where a person who makes a complaint decides later to withdraw it, the Governance Committee will review the situation and decide whether to continue the process. The process will be continued if the facts indicate that harassment or abuse occurred as failure to do so may result in liability for the Association.

Legal Counsel

A person being interviewed has a right to his or her legal counsel being present. Interviewees should be reminded that the fact gathering phase is not for the purpose of making a decision on the complaint, but to determine if a hearing should be held. Although, information gathered during the interview phase can be used in a hearing.

4. Policy Implementation

All individuals associated with the Ontario Cheerleading Federation are responsible for implementing this policy through their behaviour and reporting of infractions. The Board of Directors is responsible for appointing the Harassment Officer. The President is responsible for informing the Governance Committee and the Harassment Officer of any complaints that come to his/her attention. The Governance Committee will be tasked with providing a fact finding report, decide how complaints are to be dealt with, direct the President to arrange a hearing if required, and provide a full report to the Association Delegate (as per the OCF Discipline and Complaints Policy).

5. Modification of Criteria

The Association, in its discretion, may revise this policy at any time.