



Acadia Minor Hockey Association Complaint & Conflict Resolution Process

Acadia Minor Hockey Association (AMHA) is committed to creating a healthy, fair and efficient environment for resolving conflict and will endeavor 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; AMHA will strive for fairness. Any process for resolution within AMHA will have oversight by applicable policies as set forth by Hockey Nova Scotia and Hockey Canada.

The AMHA Complaint & Conflict Resolution Process guides the handling of all concerns and 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 AMHA Chair of Conflict Resolution, Conflict Resolution Committee and/or AMHA Board Chair. Promotion of the concern may be to inform that the concern/conflict has not been resolved to the satisfaction of parties involved. This process is meant to address conflict/complaints that involves AMHA members, specifically, conflict between parents, coaches, Executive and volunteers.

This process may also be applied for conflict between players and players/coaches. AMHA Conflict Resolution Committee will assist AMHA Executive members in supporting behavior and conflict issues of its membership (players, volunteers, and parents) as well to offer assistance in addressing complaints/concerns brought forward by AMHA members.

The Conflict Resolution Committee will be overseen by the Chair of Conflict Resolution and will consist of a combination of AMHA Executive including Risk Management and Member(s)-at-Large from the AMHA membership. In instances of conflict of interest involving members of the Conflict Resolution Committee; the 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 Conflict Resolution Committee will focus on areas of complaint that involve the following:

- Violations to the AMHA Code of Conduct, or violations to codes of conduct as defined by Hockey Nova Scotia and Hockey Canada
- 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



- Behaviors that would be reported under the [Independent Third Party \(ITP\) Hockey Canada Process](#) such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, repeated instances of bullying, harassment or discrimination may also come to AMHA Conflict Resolution as determined by the ITP Reviewers

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 Conflict Resolution Committee.

Conflict & Complaint Process for Acadia Minor Hockey Association

The process for any complaint or conflict regarding teams or team staff or individuals under the jurisdiction of Acadia Minor Hockey is to follow the process as outlined below:

- **Observe “the 24-hour rule”:** Games and practices are not appropriate places to attempt to resolve conflicts. Allow a minimum of 24 hours to pass prior to addressing an issue and use this cooling-off period to validate facts and organize your thoughts.
- Any issue involving discrimination (sexual, racial, etc.) or harassment (verbal, physical, social media, etc.) at the team level should **be immediately** elevated to the Chair of Conflict Resolution and AMHA Board Chair.
- **Level 1: Team Level Discussion:** After following the “24-hour rule”, if you have a concern/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 AMHA; then you 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 the Chair of Conflict Resolution
 - (b) If the outcome has been resolved at Level 1 (Team Level), there may not be a need to elevate it, yet it may be worthwhile for the Team manager or Head Coach to inform the Chair of Conflict Resolution that the conflict has been resolved
 - (c) If the outcome is not satisfactory to either party, then the concern should be elevated to Level 2 **using the AMHA Complaint & Concern Form. Concerns and complaints will only be accepted by completing this form and will not be accepted verbally.**



- **Level 2: Chair of Conflict Resolution (CRC):** Issues that are not resolved at the Team Level, to the satisfaction to all involved, should be brought to the attention of the CRC & AMHA Board Chair using the AMHA Complaint & Concern Form. The CRC will review the concern/complaint and follow up with the team staff and/or others involved as applicable. The CRC may mediate a discussion and/or clarify expectations for a resolution moving forward and may also address coaching styles as applicable to correct concerning behavior; or offer insight to parents/non-coaches on the coaching philosophy for AMHA. The CRC may consult, as applicable with the Chair of Risk Management and/or AMHA Technical Director
 - (a) If the outcome has been resolved at the CRC level, there may not be a need to elevate it to Level 3; it may be worthwhile to inform the AMHA Board Chair that the conflict has been resolved.
 - (b) If the outcome is not satisfactory to either party, then the concern should be elevated to Level 3. The complaint/concerned outlined on the Complaints & Concerns Form will be reviewed by the AMHA Conflict Resolution Committee.

- **Level 3: Conflict Resolution Committee Level:** If the response in Level 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 reviewed by the AMHA Conflict Resolution Committee.
 - (a) Investigation: The 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 Committee will recommend outcomes to the AMHA Executive prior to releasing any decisions.
 - (c) The 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 Committee will provide clear direction on the expectations that need to be adhered to, pursuant to any and all policies of AMHA and Hockey Nova Scotia. The timeframe for this response may vary, depending



on the concerns and time it takes to gather information; the Committee will make efforts to expedite the process to avoid unnecessary delays.

(d) Responses may follow a progressive approach as outlined below which 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 from AMHA activities
 - v. Request to HNS for further and more severe sanctions, including suspension for a significant amount of time and/or revocation of membership from AMHA
 - vi. or any other fair and reasonable process for accountability, as determined by the Committee
- e. If the Complainant is not satisfied with the outcome from the Conflict Resolution 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 AMHA, unless requested by HNS.
 - ii. Should a member decide to bring legal action against AMHA 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.

Concerns involving persons/teams outside of AMHA

- If the concern involves an individual, team or team staff that falls outside of the jurisdiction of AMHA (e.g. from another association), the team manager can pass along the concern, in writing, to **the Chair of _____** for follow up. AMHA will not be actively engaged in the disciplinary proceedings of other minor hockey associations.

Please note that concerns/complaints that do not follow this process may be excluded from review.



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 them.

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 behaviors, 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 rumors (may happen in person, over the phone or computer).

3. **Harassment:** Offensive behavior, emotional, physical and/or sexual that involves discrimination against a person because of their race, national or ethnic origin, age,



color, 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 AMHA are expected to abide by and uphold the Code of Conduct of AMHA, Hockey Nova Scotia and Hockey Canada. Members of AMHA 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 AMHA to operate as well as understanding that remaining calm and respectful are important factors to work through any situation of conflict.