

Mile High Rowing Club - Anti-Bullying Policy

Purpose:

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Mile High Rowing Club and will not be tolerated. Bullying is counterproductive to team spirit and can be devastating to a victim. The Club is committed to providing a safe, caring and friendly environment for all of our members. If bullying does occur, all athletes and parents should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a coach, board member or captain. Bullying is subject to disciplinary action and can result in expulsion from the club.

Objectives of the Club's Bullying Policy and Action Plan:

1. To make it clear that the Club will not tolerate bullying in any form.
2. To define bullying and give all board members, coaches, parents and athletes a good understanding of what constitutes bullying.
3. To make it known to all parents, athletes and coaching staff that there is a policy and protocol should any bullying issues arise.
4. To make reporting of bullying, clear and understandable.
5. To spread the word that Mile High Rowing Club takes bullying seriously and that all athletes and parents can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

What is bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression, whether intentional or not, which hurts another person. Bullying results in pain and distress. Bullying is the severe or repeated use by one or more persons of oral, written, electronic or other technological expression, image, sound, data or intelligence of any nature (regardless of the method of transmission), or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at any other person or persons that to a reasonably objective person has the effect of:

1. causing physical or emotional harm to the other person or damage to the other person's property;
2. placing the other person in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
3. creating a hostile environment for the other person at any Mile High Rowing Club activity;
4. infringing on the rights of the other person at any Mile High Rowing Club activity;

5. materially and substantially disrupting the training process or the orderly operation of any MHRC activity.

Reporting Procedure

Grievance Reporting Procedure

If any member wishes to report or questions the actions of another member, coach or staff member of the MHRC, they can promptly report the facts of the incident(s) and the name of the involved individual(s) to an MHRC staff member. The following is the proper procedure for filing a grievance:

1. Assistant Coach –A member’s Assistant Coach should be contacted first, and given the immediate opportunity to directly address the concerns that have been raised;
2. Head Coach – The Head Coach is the next point of contact if the Assistant Coach is unable to positively resolve the issue in question, or if it is uncomfortable working with the Assistant
3. President and the Board of Directors - This group will make a final determination of a dispute or grievance only if satisfactory results have not been achieved from the process outlined above.

How we handle bullying

If bullying is occurring during team-related activities, we STOP BULLYING ON THE SPOT using the following steps:

- Intervene immediately. It is ok to get another adult to help
- Separate the kids involved
- Make sure everyone is safe
- Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs
- Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders
- Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

If bullying is occurring at our club or it is reported to be occurring at our club, we address the bullying by FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED and SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED using the following approach:

FINDING OUT WHAT HAPPENED

1. First, we get the facts.
 - Keep all the involved children separate.
 - Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids
 - Listen without blaming

- Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened
- It may be difficult to get the whole story, especially if multiple athletes are involved or the bullying involves social bullying or cyberbullying.
- Collect all available information.

2. Then, we determine if it's bullying. There are many behaviors that look like bullying but require different approaches. It is important to determine whether the situation is bullying or something else. Review the definition of bullying; To determine if the behavior is bullying or something else, consider the following questions:

- What is the history between the kids involved?
- Have there been past conflicts?
- Is there a power imbalance? Remember that a power imbalance is not limited to physical strength. It is sometimes not easily recognized. If the targeted child feels like there is a power imbalance, there probably is.
- Has this happened before?
- Is the child worried it will happen again? Remember that it may not matter "who started it." Some kids who are bullied may be seen as annoying or provoking, but this does not excuse the bullying behavior

3. Once you have determined if the situation is bullying, support all of the kids involved.

SUPPORTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

1. Support the kids who are being bullied

- Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on and show you want to help. Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and fellow team members and coaches may all have valuable input. It may help to:
 - Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Remember that changes to routine should be minimized. He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out.
 - Develop a game plan. Maintain open communication between the Club and parents. Discuss the steps that will be taken and how bullying will be addressed going forward.
 - Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

2. Address bullying behavior

- Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is. Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.

Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:

- Sometimes children bully to fit in or just to make fun of someone is a little different from them. In other words, there may be some insecurity involved.
- Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support.
- Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others.
- Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences:
- Zero tolerance or “three strikes, you're out” strategies don't work. Suspending or removing from the team athletes who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Athletes may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or getting kicked off the team is the consequence.
- Conflict resolution and peer mediation don't work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.

3. Support bystanders who witness bullying. Every day, kids witness bullying. They want to help, but don't know how. Fortunately, there are a few simple, safe ways that athletes can help stopbullying when they see it happening.

- a. Be a friend to the person being bullied
- b. Tell a trusted adult – your parent, coach, or club board member
- c. Help the kid being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction, focus the attention on something else, or offer a way for the target to get out of the situation. “Let's go, practice is about to start.”
- d. Set a good example by not bullying others. Don't give the bully an audience. Bullies are encouraged by the attention they get from bystanders. If you do nothing else, just walk away.