



Pitman Soccer Association Policy against discrimination, intimidation & bullying (Adopted February 16, 2022)

Section 1 - Statement of Policy

The Pitman Soccer Association (PSA) prohibits discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying, as defined by this policy, against players or volunteers at any PSA-sponsored or approved event. PSA expects that all volunteers and players will provide equal treatment and access to all PSA programs and services including team formation, volunteer positions and financial aid/scholarship programs without regard to their of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, affectional or sexual orientation, familial status, genetic information, sex, gender identity or expression, disability (including perceived disability; physical, mental, mental and/or intellectual disabilities), socioeconomic status, or linguistic characteristics of a national origin group.

Section 1.01 - Definitions:

- (a) “*Discrimination*” means any act that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably differentiating in treatment, based on disability, race, color, gender, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, marital status, socioeconomic status, cultural background, familial status, physical characteristics, or linguistic characteristics of a national origin group.
- (b) “*Harassment*” means unwanted behavior of a nonverbal, verbal, written, graphic, sexual, or physical nature that is directed at an individual or group of players on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, affectional or sexual orientation, familial status, genetic information, sex, gender identity or expression, disability (including perceived disability; physical, mental, mental and/or intellectual disabilities), socioeconomic status, or linguistic characteristics of a national origin group.
- (c) “*Intimidation or bullying*” means any act or verbal, non-verbal or written communication that substantially interferes with a player’s ability to attend practices, play in games or otherwise participate in the sport of soccer within PSA’s program. Registered volunteers performing their jobs as part of PSA are also protected from intimidation or bullying behavior from players or parents or intimidation can include:
 - I. Physically harming a player or endangering a player’s property;
 - II. Knowingly placing a player in reasonable fear of physical harm to the player or damage to the player’s property;
 - III. Creating a hostile environment through action or word (written or verbal).

Section 1.02 - PSA Volunteers shall NOT do the following:

- (a) Treat one player differently from another in determining whether he or she satisfies any requirement or condition for the provision of the program, service, benefit, or other aid;
- (b) Provide programs, services, benefits, or other aid, in a manner that differentiates among players; Deny any player such programs, services, benefits, or other aid without basis;
- (c) Subject any player to separate or different rules of behavior, sanctions, or other treatment from other players in like situations or circumstances;



- (d) Otherwise limit any player in the enjoyment of any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity available to all players;
- (e) Allow the parent(s) or guardian(s) of any player to adversely impact the enjoyment of any one player's or a team's overall experience through their actions at the field at practices and games. This includes behavior in violation of the Borough of Pitman or the Pitman School District's rules governing the use or presence of alcohol, tobacco and pets/animals at all games and practices.
- (f) Allow player-to-player harassment, discrimination, intimidation, or bullying and will take direct action when it is observed or reported;

Section 2 – PSA Player, Volunteer, and Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

PSA players, volunteers and parents/guardians will follow written policy to ensure that players are not discriminated against, harassed, intimidated, or bullied based on race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, affectional or sexual orientation, familial status, genetic information, sex, gender identity or expression, disability (including perceived disability; physical, mental, mental and/or intellectual disabilities), socioeconomic status, or linguistic characteristics of a national origin group, with regard to the following: Providing reasonable access to all PSA practices, games, registration events and end of season tournaments or celebrations.

Section 2.01 Obligation To Report

A volunteer, player or his or her parent/guardian who believes that the volunteer or player is the recipient of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or bullying from another player, parent/guardian, board member, or volunteer is encouraged to report the incident to the one of the PSA representatives listed in Section 2.02.

Coaches, referees or any other PSA volunteer who observe players engaging in discriminatory, harassing, intimidating, or bullying behaviors are responsible for taking action to deal with the behavior AND for reporting the incident to the President, Vice President and/or Director of Coaching within 24 hours of observing the behaviors mentioned previously. Information relayed should include the date & time of the incident, the names of the parties involved (if possible), the coaches of the teams involved, and a detailed summary of the event. Where possible, a Harassment Complaint Form shall be completed by the observer but shall not be required to initiate an investigation.

Section 2.02 Complaint

Any PSA volunteer, player or parent/guardian who has knowledge of conduct in violation of this policy shall immediately report his or her complaint/concern to one or more of the following individuals:

- (a) President or Vice President
- (b) Director of Coaching and/or Team Coach

The individual receiving the complaint will ask those bringing the complaint to complete a Harassment Complaint Form. However, individuals are not required to complete the Complaint Form to initiate a harassment complaint under this policy. (The Harassment Complaint Form is found in the final pages of this policy) The individual receiving the complaint will also notify the President and/or Board of Directors immediately or as soon as practicable.



When any of the individuals listed in (a) and (b) above learns of a violation of this policy, the individual shall assist the victim in reporting the alleged incident(s) of harassment.

Section 2.03 Investigation Procedure

The Board of Directors shall conduct an investigation into the harassment complaint to determine the merits of the allegations. The President shall perform the investigation or shall designate an objective investigator from the Board to determine the validity of any complaint.

The investigation shall be completed in a reasonable time to resolve the issue and minimize the effects of such investigation on the parties involved. The investigation will, at a minimum, include interviews with the individuals involved bringing the complaint and the accused.

To the extent possible, all persons involved in a harassment complaint will be given the utmost protection of privacy. Specifically, PSA, will strive, both during and after the investigation, to maintain confidentiality to the fullest extent possible, including confidentiality of the identities of all persons involved or alleged to be involved in the incident, revealing only those particulars of the matter to the extent necessary for a thorough investigation. Any parent/guardian, volunteer or player who unnecessarily compromises the confidentiality of an investigation will be subject to appropriate discipline.

Section 2.04 Final Decision

- (a) If the situation allows, there will be an attempt to assist players and/or parents in resolving concerns and issues prior to the use of the formal disciplinary or complaint procedures. This may include counseling, education, mediation and/or other opportunities for problem solving between both parties. However, the severity of a specific incident may require immediate disciplinary action which may include immediate dismissal of the parent & player from PSA's current and/or future season of players. Potential resolutions may include, but are not limited to, the following:
- a. request for apology to the team or to an individual player, either written and/or verbal,
 - b. removal from the team for a single game and accompanying practices,
 - c. removal from the team for an ordered number of games and accompanying practices, or a
 - d. complete suspension from the team for the remainder of the season without refund of registration fees, or in the most extreme case,
 - e. suspension of the player from the league for the remainder of the season and for a finite or infinite number of future seasons or refusal of registration of player or players into the current or finite or infinite number of future seasons.

The preceding list is not meant as an all-inclusive list of possible remedies for failure to adhere to or abide by the harassment policy; rather it is to serve as a guideline for PSA administration, coach and referee volunteers as they carry out their respective jobs and balance the needs of the affected players with those of the other party, the team and the rest of that division and the region as a whole. As the case may require or warrant, individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials.

- (b) Final decision on the participation of any parent, player or volunteer rests with the Board of Directors. In situations of immediate danger to other players or volunteers or in situations in which the harassment is ongoing and is not able to be stopped by normal means, the President may make an immediate and final decision about an individual's ability to participate in the current or future season without asking for or receiving the input of the Board of Directors. His or her decision is binding upon the association and there is no arbitration or mediation process available to the impacted parties. Any player whose registration is terminated as a result of this policy will NOT receive a refund if the termination is occurring after the start of regularly scheduled games.



- (c) Re-enrollment for future seasons is not guaranteed. Each case in which discipline has been taken will be considered separately and if a registration application is presented for a future season for the player or parents involved in the disciplinary issue, a vote will be taken by the Board of Directors in order to decide whether this player will be allowed to register for that season. No message or information will be sent out ahead of time as to a player's registration status until that information is requested by the appropriate parent or guardian. Preference will be given to players who have completed the recommended disciplinary action and whose parents were supportive of the need to censure, remove or discipline said player.

Section 2.05 Retaliation

Retaliation against any player, who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry is prohibited.

Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of policy and independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. False charges, whether written or verbal, shall also be regarded as a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action or other appropriate sanctions.