

LOUDOUN ELITE VOLLEYBALL

POLICY AGAINST BULLYING

Introduction

Loudoun Elite Volleyball Club is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members of our community. We believe that every individual has the right to participate in volleyball activities free from bullying and harassment of any kind. As an organization, we are dedicated to fostering a culture of respect, empathy, and support where everyone can thrive both on and off the court.

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1. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance and is repeated over time or has the potential to be repeated. This behavior may take various forms, including physical, verbal, relational, and cyberbullying. At Loudoun Elite Volleyball Club, we adhere to the following definitions provided by SafeSport and USA Volleyball:

- SafeSport Definition: SafeSport defines bullying as any act or conduct described as bullying under federal or state law, including cyberbullying, harassment, hazing, and physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

- USA Volleyball Definition: USA Volleyball defines bullying as repeated acts or conduct that is intended to cause harm, fear, or distress to others, including but not limited to verbal or physical abuse, threats, intimidation, coercion, or exclusion.

Bullying behavior undermines the core values of our organization and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Everyone associated with Loudoun Elite Volleyball Club, including athletes, coaches, staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, and spectators, is expected to uphold this policy and actively contribute to creating a safe and supportive environment for all.

2. Prohibition of Bullying

Bullying, in any form, is strictly prohibited within Loudoun Elite Volleyball Club. This prohibition applies to all members of our community, including athletes, coaches, staff, volunteers, parents/guardians, and spectators. We are committed to maintaining a culture of respect, fairness, and inclusion, where every individual is valued and treated with dignity.

3. Responsibilities

Athletes:

- Treat teammates, coaches, opponents, and officials with respect and courtesy at all times.
- Refrain from engaging in any form of bullying behavior, including but not limited to physical, verbal, relational, or cyberbullying.
- Report any incidents of bullying to a coach, staff member, or trusted adult immediately.

Coaches:

- Lead by example and foster a positive and inclusive team culture.
- Educate athletes about the importance of respect, empathy, and sportsmanship.
- Promptly address any reports or observations of bullying behavior and follow the club's reporting procedures.

Staff and Volunteers:

- Support the implementation and enforcement of the club's bullying policy.
- Be vigilant in identifying and addressing bullying behavior in any club-related activities.
- Provide support and resources to individuals affected by bullying incidents.

Parents/Guardians:

- Encourage positive behavior and sportsmanship among athletes.
- Communicate openly with coaches and staff regarding any concerns related to bullying.
- Support their child in understanding and adhering to the club's policies and values.

Spectators:

- Respect the rights and dignity of all individuals involved in volleyball activities.
- Refrain from engaging in behavior that could be perceived as bullying or harassment.
- Serve as positive role models and promote a supportive atmosphere during games and events.

Club Administration:

- Establish and enforce policies and procedures to prevent and address bullying.
- Provide training and resources to educate participants about bullying prevention and intervention.
- Ensure that reported incidents of bullying are promptly and thoroughly investigated, and appropriate actions are taken in accordance with the club's policies.

Every member of Loudoun Elite Volleyball Club plays a crucial role in creating a safe and inclusive environment. By fulfilling their responsibilities, individuals contribute to the well-being and success of the entire community.

4. Reporting Procedures

Reporting Bullying Incidents:

- Any individual who experiences or witnesses bullying behavior within Loudoun Elite Volleyball Club is encouraged to report the incident promptly.
- Reports can be made to a coach, staff member, club administrator, or designated club contact. Individuals may also utilize anonymous reporting mechanisms, such as online forms or suggestion boxes, if preferred.
- It is important to provide as much detail as possible when making a report, including the nature of the incident, the individuals involved, and any relevant evidence or documentation.

Confidentiality:

- All reports of bullying will be handled with the utmost confidentiality and sensitivity.
- Information shared during the reporting process will be kept confidential to the extent possible, while still ensuring a thorough investigation and appropriate response.
- Retaliation against individuals who make reports in good faith or participate in investigations is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

5. Investigation Process**Prompt and Thorough Investigation:**

Upon receipt of a report of bullying, Loudoun Elite Volleyball Club will initiate a prompt and thorough investigation to determine the facts of the case and take appropriate action. The investigation will be conducted impartially and objectively, ensuring fairness and transparency throughout the process.

Evidence Collection:

- Investigators will gather relevant evidence to substantiate the allegations of bullying. This may include but is not limited to:
 - a. Written documentation, such as emails, text messages, social media posts, or other communications.
 - b. Witness statements from individuals who observed the alleged bullying incidents.
 - c. Physical evidence, such as photographs, videos, or other tangible items related to the incident.
- All evidence collected will be handled and stored securely to maintain confidentiality and integrity throughout the investigation process.

Interviewing Process:

- Investigators will conduct interviews with all relevant parties, including the individual making the report, the alleged perpetrator(s), witnesses, and any other individuals who may have pertinent information.
- Interviews will be conducted in a private and confidential setting to ensure the comfort and safety of those involved.
- Interview questions will be open-ended and non-leading to allow each individual to provide their perspective on the incident(s) in question.
- Investigators will exercise sensitivity and empathy when interviewing individuals who have experienced bullying, recognizing the potential emotional impact of the situation.

Multiple Perspectives:

- To gain a comprehensive understanding of the incident(s) and the dynamics involved, investigators will seek to gather multiple perspectives from different individuals.
- Witnesses will be encouraged to provide honest and accurate accounts of what they observed, free from coercion or influence.
- In cases where conflicting accounts are provided, investigators will carefully evaluate the credibility of each witness and corroborate information through additional evidence or interviews.

Documentation and Recordkeeping:

- Throughout the investigation process, detailed documentation will be maintained to record all relevant information, including interview summaries, evidence collected, and investigative findings.
- All documentation will be kept confidential and stored securely in accordance with privacy laws and club policies.
- Documentation will be reviewed and approved by the board of directors to ensure accuracy and completeness before any decisions or actions are taken based on the investigation findings.

Communication and Updates:

- The club will provide regular updates to all parties involved in the investigation, including the individual making the report, the alleged perpetrator(s), and any other affected individuals.
- Updates will include information on the progress of the investigation, any interim measures implemented to ensure safety, and the expected timeline for resolution.
- Communication will be conducted with sensitivity and respect for the privacy of those involved, while still maintaining transparency and accountability throughout the process.

6. Consequences**Consequences for Bullying Behavior:**

- Bullying behavior, in any form, is unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action.
- The consequences for individuals found to have engaged in bullying behavior will be determined based on the severity of the offense, the impact on the victim, and any mitigating factors.
- Disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to:
 - i. Verbal warning
 - ii. Written warning
 - iii. Making amends
 - iv. Temporary suspension from club activities
 - v. Permanent expulsion from the club
- The club reserves the right to impose additional consequences as deemed appropriate, including educational interventions, counseling, or restitution.

Appeals Process:

- Individuals who are subject to disciplinary action have the right to appeal the decision.
- Appeals must be submitted in writing to the club administration within a specified timeframe, along with any supporting documentation or evidence.

- Appeals will be reviewed by an impartial panel or designated authority, who will consider the merits of the case and render a final decision.

7. Support Services

Support for Victims:

- Loudoun Elite Volleyball Club is committed to providing support and resources to individuals who have been affected by bullying incidents.
- Victims of bullying will be offered confidential support services, including counseling, mediation, and referrals to external resources as needed.
- The club will work closely with victims to ensure their safety, well-being, and continued participation in club activities.

Support for Perpetrators:

- Individuals who have engaged in bullying behavior may also be offered support and resources to address the underlying issues contributing to their behavior.
- Interventions may include counseling, education on respectful behavior, and opportunities for restitution or community service.
- The club will work with perpetrators to promote understanding, accountability, and positive behavioral change.

Preventive Measures:

- In addition to responding to bullying incidents, Loudoun Elite Volleyball Club is committed to implementing preventive measures to create a culture of respect and inclusion.
- Preventive measures may include:
 - i. Educational programs and workshops on bullying prevention and bystander intervention.
 - ii. Promotion of positive values such as sportsmanship, empathy, and teamwork.
 - iii. Regular monitoring and assessment of club culture and dynamics to identify and address potential risk factors.

8. Preventive Measures

Education and Training:

- Loudoun Elite Volleyball Club will provide ongoing education and training to all participants on bullying prevention, recognition, and intervention.
- Coaches, staff, volunteers, and athletes will receive training on the club's policies and procedures, as well as strategies for promoting positive behavior and creating a supportive team environment.
- Parents/guardians and spectators will also have access to educational resources and workshops to increase awareness of bullying issues and their role in prevention.

Promotion of Positive Culture:

- The club will actively promote a positive and inclusive culture that values diversity, respect, and sportsmanship.
- Coaches and team leaders will model positive behavior and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and support among athletes.

- Events and activities will incorporate themes of kindness, empathy, and inclusivity to reinforce the club's values and discourage bullying behavior.

9. Training and Education

Ongoing Training:

- Loudoun Elite Volleyball Club is committed to providing ongoing training and education on bullying prevention and intervention.
- Training sessions will be conducted regularly for coaches, staff, volunteers, and other participants to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to address bullying effectively.
- Training content will be tailored to the specific needs of each group and may include topics such as conflict resolution, communication skills, and recognizing the signs of bullying.

Evaluation and Feedback:

- The club will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of its training programs and seek feedback from participants to identify areas for improvement.
- Feedback mechanisms, such as surveys or focus groups, will be utilized to gather input from coaches, athletes, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders.
- Training materials and curriculum will be updated and refined based on feedback and emerging best practices in bullying prevention.

10. Review and Revision

Regular Review Process:

- Loudoun Elite Volleyball Club will conduct regular reviews of its bullying policy to ensure it remains effective and up-to-date.
- Reviews will be conducted at least annually, or more frequently as needed, to assess the policy's implementation, identify any gaps or areas for improvement, and incorporate feedback from stakeholders.
- The club will also monitor changes in laws, regulations, and industry standards related to bullying prevention and make updates to the policy as necessary to maintain compliance.

Participants Involvement:

- Participants' input will be solicited during the review process to ensure that the bullying policy reflects the needs and perspectives of the entire community.
- Coaches, athletes, parents/guardians, staff, volunteers, and other relevant parties will have the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions for improving the policy.
- The club will communicate any updates or revisions to the policy to all stakeholders in a timely and transparent manner.