



## **Oklahoma Soccer Association Anti-Bullying Position Statement**

OSA expects that all members of the soccer community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences. OSA is committed to providing a supportive and fun environment for players, coaches, parents, and referees that is free from bullying and cyberbullying. This commitment is an integral part of our comprehensive efforts to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the well-being of our members.

According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services and the Stop Bullying program, “Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.”

Bullying can take many forms. Verbal bullying includes teasing, name-calling, taunting, or threatening to cause harm. Physical bullying includes hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking or breaking someone’s things, or making mean or rude hand gestures. And finally bullying can be social, often times called ‘relational bullying’, when someone is left out on purpose, when someone tells kids to not be friends with someone, when a child spreads rumors about another kid, or when a child intentionally embarrasses another child in public.

Hazing is taking these same activities of harassment, abuse or humiliation and using them as a way of initiating a person into a group or a team.

Bullying/Cyberbullying is an aggressive behavior or intentional “harm doing” by one person or a group, generally carried out repeatedly and over time and involving a power differential.

1. The behavior is intentional and purposed rather than accidental or inadvertent.
2. The behavior involves maliciousness on the part of the aggressor. This may include but not be limited to direct/overt aggression which may include hitting, kicking, taking items by force as well as verbal violence such as taunting, teasing, name calling, and threatening. Indirect aggression includes more subtle, manipulative acts such as ostracizing, gossip, rumor spreading, social sabotage, exclusion, intimidating or controlling another person.
3. The behavior must occur on a repetitive basis. This may cause the target to worry about what the bully will do next and perhaps change daily patterns to avoid personal contact with the bully.
4. There is an inherent demonstration of power, either perceived or actual by the offender over the target. This power may include popularity, physical strength or stature, social competence, quick wit, extroversion, confidence, intelligence, age, sex, race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status.

### **Conflict vs. Bullying**

Conflict is a mutually competitive or opposing action or engagement, including a disagreement, an argument or a fight which is a normal part of human development. Bullying is one-sided,

where one or more students are victims of one or more person's aggression, which is intended to physically or emotionally hurt the victim(s).

OSA prohibits bullying at all OSA-sanctioned activities. Bullying may be verbal or written expression or expression through electronic means, or physical conduct. Bullying should not be tolerated by OSA, the Member Associations or clubs and any player or parent of a player who believes that the player or another player has experienced bullying or that a player has engaged in bullying is encouraged to immediately report the incident. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is prohibited.

OSA takes specific steps to create a safe, supportive environment for our soccer community, and to provide all players with the skills, knowledge, and strategies to prevent or respond to bullying, harassment, teasing, and any forms of retaliation.

OSA will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior, including any form of bullying, cyberbullying or retaliation, in/during OSA-sanctioned activities.