Zero Tolerance Policy

Royal York Football Club is a strong supporter of making soccer safe for our youth; the Club supports zero tolerance as it relates to all forms of abuse: verbal, physical, emotional, and sexual.

All relationships within the Club context – whether involving Club staff, coaches/managers, volunteers, players, parents/family members, supporters or referees – must be based on mutual trust and respect. Any act of abuse is a betrayal of that trust.

The Club will investigate and act upon all complaints or reports of inappropriate behaviour.

This Zero Tolerance Policy attempts to respect diverse individual and cultural viewpoints while protecting individuals from real or perceived abuse.

Definitions of Abuse:

1. **Verbal Abuse** – Verbal abuse includes remarks that are rude or threatening in nature and that tend to demoralize or demean another person. Words that degrade another person constitute a form of verbal abuse. Verbal abuse includes racial or ethnic insults. All complaints of verbal abuse will be investigated by the Club and may be reported to police with the consent of the victim or, in the case of a minor, a parent.

2. **Physical Abuse** – Physical abuse refers to inappropriate behaviour such as punching, pushing, slapping, kicking, spitting or pinching another individual. All complaints of physical abuse will be investigated by the Club and may be reported to police with the consent of the victim or, in the case of a minor, a parent.

3. **Emotional Abuse** – Emotional abuse signifies the lack of sensitivity on the part of anyone associated with the Club towards another individual. In particular, Club officials (coaches, and managers) should be aware of the

power that is inherent in such positions and strive for sensitivity in dealing with individuals in positions of supervision (players, Club staff, volunteers) and with parents. Emotional abuse includes racial, physical or ethnic insults. All complaints of emotional abuse will be investigated by the Club.

4. **Sexual Abuse** – Sexual shall be defined as:

    a. sexual intercourse or other forms of physical sexual relations between at least one individual associated with the Club and another person where the activity is not consensual
    b. any and all sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual relations with a minor
    c. touching of a sexual nature and
    d. behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature

The Club will immediately report all complaints of sexual abuse to the police.

Reporting Guidelines and Procedures

1. Violations of the Zero Tolerance Policy should be reported immediately to the Club office by the victim(s) and/or by those close to them (a parent, a teammate, a coach etc.).

2. A complaint can be communicated verbally, initially, to a Club official or employee but must be followed up in writing (fill out Serious Occurrence Report Form). If the complaint involves physical or sexual abuse, the Club official or employee will contact the police if the individual alleging abuse has not already done so and with the individual's consent.

3. All complaints of abuse will be immediately investigated by the Club.

4. All complaints to the Club must be in written form (fill out Serious Occurrence Report Form) before a complaint is dealt with. However, the Club will immediately report criminal activities to the police (with the consent of the individual alleging abuse) without a written complaint.

5. Once a written complaint has been filed with the Club, a Discipline Committee consisting of Discipline Chair and the operational team members will discuss the complaint with the individual alleging abuse (note: in the case of sexual abuse, the Club may designate a Club official of the same gender as the individual alleging abuse to contact the victim).

6. Discipline Chair assigned to lead the investigation into the complaint will schedule a Discipline Hearing within ten (10) business days of notice in the

7. individual(s) whom the complaints has been filed against. The individual(s) who are named on the complaint shall be contacted by registered mail and requested to appear at the Discipline Hearing.

8. In the case of Physical Abuse such as fighting, kicking, etc. the Discipline Committee will decide between either a Discipline by Review or Discipline by Hearing process to determine appropriate penalties and/or suspensions.

9. The committee shall hold a hearing and invite the individual(s) named on the complaint to be present at the hearing. Only individuals called by the committee shall be allowed to participate in a hearing. The committee shall then deliberate following the meeting with the individual(s) who are named on the complaint.

10. The decision shall be communicated to the individual alleging abuse and the individual named in the complaint within ten (10) working day of the Hearing.

11. Penalties for contravening the Zero Tolerance Policy can range from a permanent suspension from the Club, suspension for a specified period of time, and a probationary period where the individual is allowed to continue with the Club. All committee decisions are final.

12. OSA guidelines for suspensions and penalties may be used as guidance in rendering suspensions for physical abuse issues such as Violent Conduct (fighting, kicking, etc).

13. Individual(s) who are charged with a criminal offense involving Club related incidents shall be immediately suspended from the Club pending resolving of the charges. No Discipline Hearing shall take place when an individual is facing criminal charges for Club related incidents. Club members who are convicted of a Criminal Code of Canada offense are subject to suspension or removal.

14. Any individual who is convicted of a criminal offense resulting from sexual or physical abuse shall be banned for life from the Club.

15. Individual(s) who violate the Zero Tolerance Policy for non-criminal activities may apply for reinstatement to the Club in writing one month prior to the end of a time specified penalty.

Handling Incidents of Abuse during a Recreational League Game (physical, verbal or emotional abuse)

1. The referee must suspend a game if an abuse incident involving a coach, player or parent/spectator occurs during a game.

2. If a coach is the source of the abuse, the referee will advise the coach that the game will be abandoned if the abuse continues.

3. If a parent/spectator is the source, the appropriate coach will be informed that the game will be abandoned unless the abuse ceases. If the source is a supporter, the appropriate coach will provide the referee with the name of the supporter and the coach must advise the fan that the next occurrence of a similar nature will result in abandonment of the game. If the spectator is not associated with either team, both coaches will be asked to speak to the spectator and request them to leave the field area.

4. The game will be restarted by the referee only if the abuse ceases, with a dropped ball at the location where the play was stopped.

5. The incident shall be reported to the Club by the referee in charge immediately following the game completion or abandonment.

6. If the abuse continues, the referee will abandon the game and clearly indicate on the game sheet that the game was abandoned due to abuse.

7. The senior game official must immediately report the incident to the Club and fill out a Special Incident Form within 24 hours.

8. In cases of physical abuse on a referee, a “Referee Assault Form” must be completed by the referee.

9. The Club will report all incidents of a criminal nature immediately to police.

Application – This Zero Tolerance Policy applies to:

1. All Club staff members

2. All coaches

3. All managers

4. All players

5. All parents/family members/guardians/caregivers

6. All referees

7. All volunteers

All elected Club officials, volunteers, Club staff, coaches, managers, and referees must sign a form acknowledging their understanding and acceptance of the Zero Tolerance Policy. This Zero Tolerance Policy shall be posted on the Club's website at all times and communicated to parents and players at the beginning of every program cycle. Ignorance of the Zero Tolerance Policy shall not be considered a valid defense against a complaint.