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## Harassment Policy

### Introduction

The Bulkley Valley Cross Country Ski Club (BVCCSC) is committed to providing opportunities for individuals to be involved in the sport of cross-country skiing and enjoy benefits related to recreation, social interaction, physical fitness, competition, volunteerism or employment. Harassment, in its various forms, can interfere with the achievement of this objective.

### Aim

The aim of this document is to state the BVCCSC policy on harassment and describe how the policy will be implemented.

### Definitions

**Harassment** – A behaviour, including comments and/or actions, which is insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, malicious, degrading or otherwise offensive to an individual or to groups of individuals, or which creates an uncomfortable or hostile environment.

The existence of harassment is determined by the reasonable perception or reaction of the person or persons who feel harassed, rather than on the intent of the perpetrator. Harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- a) written or verbal abuse or threats;
- b) racial or ethnic slurs;
- c) unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendoes or taunting about a person's body, attire, age, marital status, ethnic or racial origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability;
- d) displaying of sexually explicit, racist or other derogatory material which is offensive or which one ought to know is offensive;
- e) unwelcome flirtations, advances, sexual comments or invitations, whether indirect or explicit;
- f) unwanted physical contact such as touching, kissing, patting or pinching;
- g) leering (offensive staring), or other obscene or suggestive gestures; and
- h) practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment, endanger a person's safety or negatively affect performance.

Note: It is recognized that there may be a certain amount of physical contact inherent in coaching athletes. Such contact may be related to teaching a new skill, spotting or other safety issues. This type of physical contact is not considered to be harassment, providing that it is welcomed by the athlete. If the



athlete indicates that the touching is unwelcome, it must stop. Otherwise it will be considered harassment.

**Reprisal/Retaliation** – An action or behaviour directed towards an individual who has complained of being harassed, who has reported witnessing harassment or who has otherwise been involved in a harassment complaint or investigation. Reprisal/retaliation is generally initiated with the intent to intimidate, threaten, humiliate, exact revenge or adversely affect the performance or working conditions of an individual. Reprisal/retaliation may include, but is not limited to, situations in which an individual involved in a harassment proceeding is:

- a) improperly denied or threatened with the withholding of promotion, advancement, training or other related opportunities or benefits (e.g. team selection); or
- b) improperly disciplined or threatened with disciplinary action, or dismissed or threatened with dismissal.

## **General Policy Regarding Harassment**

BVCCSC will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment, including reprisal/retaliation.

BVCCSC is committed to encouraging a supportive sport environment and respectful work place. Proactive measures that will be taken to prevent or discourage harassment within the club will include:

- a) communicating, publicizing and emphasizing the principles contained in this policy;
- b) incorporating harassment awareness into the orientation (or, in the case of coaches, training) provided to all persons occupying positions of authority within the BVCCSC.

Complaints will be addressed in a sensitive, responsible and timely fashion, with due regard to confidentiality.

Members of BVCCSC who perceive that they have been the subject of harassment will have the right to seek redress within the BVCCSC without fear of reprisal or retaliation.

Members of BVCCSC who perceive that they have been harassed retain the right to seek assistance externally, including recourse to the provincial human rights commission, even when action has been initiated within the BVCCSC.



## **Complaint Process**

### **Applicability**

This process applies only to members of the BVCCSC, employees and volunteers of BVCCSC and any other individuals who expressly represent BVCCSC or are engaged by BVCCSC on a temporary basis while so engaged for a tasked event. This process only applies to allegations of harassment when both the complainant and the respondent are members, employees and/or volunteers.

### **Confidentiality**

BVCCSC recognizes that it can be extremely difficult to come forward with a complaint of harassment, and that it can be devastating to be wrongly accused of harassment. Therefore, in the interests of both the complainant and respondent, harassment complaint proceedings conducted by BVCCSC will be treated as confidential to the greatest extent possible, consistent with each party's right to a procedurally fair process.

Despite the importance of a high degree of confidentiality in the conduct of the proceedings, due process requires an element of transparency. Accordingly, the final decision of the Discipline/Dispute Resolution Committee which has been convened to deal with a formal complaint of harassment may be made public. Therefore, BVCCSC cannot commit to protecting the identity of complainants once a formal complaint is received.

### **Reporting Harassment**

Members who believe they are being harassed should seek the advice of the BVCCSC Chair or another person in the club's executive or other position of authority. There are four possible courses of action:

- a) they may confront the person whose behaviour is offensive and inform him/her that the behaviour in question is offensive and contrary to the BVCCSC policy; if this option is exercised and the behaviour ceases, they may elect to take no further action;
- b) in addition to confronting the person whose behaviour is offensive, they may immediately report the behaviour with a complaint to the BVCCSC Chair;
- c) if after confronting the person whose behaviour is offensive and the behaviour continues, they may then report the situation with a complaint to the BVCCSC Chair;
- d) if they are uncomfortable with confronting the person whose behaviour is offensive, they may report the behaviour directly to the BVCCSC Chair.



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BVCCSC officials (executive, staff, coach, course conductor or event officials) who witness behaviour that may constitute harassment or who otherwise becomes aware that harassment may be taking place are required to take action as described above.

Members who witness behaviour that may constitute harassment affecting another BVCCSC member, or who otherwise become aware that harassment caused by a member may be taking place, are encouraged to take action as described above.

### **Complaint Investigation, Mediation, Discipline and/or Dispute Resolution**

Upon receiving a complaint, the Chair or delegate will engage a mediator and/or the club's Discipline/Dispute Resolution Committee to investigate the complaint and make determinations and decisions consistent with this policy and the BVCCSC Discipline and Dispute Resolution Policy.

### **Authority**

This policy is approved by and promulgated under the authority of the BVCCSC Board of Directors (BOD)

BVCCSC BOD January 5, 2010