



Anti-Harassment Policy

1. PURPOSE

Ontario Equestrian (OE) is committed to providing a sport and work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, with equal opportunities for all and without any discriminatory practices. Every individual associated with OE has the right to participate in a safe and supportive environment and the responsibility to contribute to that environment through respectful conduct. This Policy outlines OE's position on Harassment and related misconduct and establishes a clear mechanism for responding to complaints in a manner that prioritizes safety, fairness, and procedural integrity.

OE adheres to the values of integrity, respect, inclusion and accountability. Harassment and abuse are incompatible with these values and will not be tolerated.

2. DEFINITIONS

The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:

- a) *Athlete*: An individual registered with OE or its affiliated organizations and participates in equestrian sport.
- b) *Bullying*: Persistent or repeated conduct intended to intimidate, offend, degrade, or humiliate. It may be overt or subtle, and can include exclusion, gossip, cyberbullying, or coercion.
- c) *Complainant*: The party alleging an infraction.
- d) *Discrimination*: The unjust or prejudicial treatment of individuals based on characteristics protected under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, including race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, or disability.
- e) *Dispute Resolution Office (DRO)*: Independent, third-party individual appointed to oversee and resolve disputes under this policy in a procedurally fair manner.
- f) *Harassment*: Conduct, gestures or comments which are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, hurtful, malicious, degrading or otherwise offensive to an individual or group of individuals and which create a hostile or intimidating environment for work or sports activities, or which negatively affect performance or work. Included in the definition of Harassment herein are all forms of Discrimination prohibited by human rights legislation which provides that no person shall discriminate against any other person on such grounds as race, ethnicity, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, disability or conviction for which a pardon has been granted.
- g) *Member*: All categories of membership within OE, as well as individuals employed by or engaged in activities with OE, including but not limited to, Athletes, Coaches, judges, Officials, volunteers, Directors, officers, administrators, spectators and parents of OE members.
- h) *Official*: An individual who has the responsibility to enforce the rules and maintain fair play during sport competitions or activities. This includes, but is not limited to, referees, judges, stewards, technical delegates, course designers, timers, scorers, and other individuals appointed to a regulatory or adjudicative role during an event or competition.
- i) *Participant*: Any individual who participates in equestrian sport activities, including but not limited to, Coaches, Athletes, volunteers, Officials and other Members.
- j) *Respondent*: The party alleged to have committed a breach.
- k) *Sexual Harassment*: Any unwanted sexual advance, request for sexual favours, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission is a condition of participation; submission or rejection influences decisions; or the conduct creates a hostile or offensive environment.
- l) *Workplace Harassment*: As defined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS)*: engaging in a

course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome.

3. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all individuals involved in any OE-sanctioned activity or representing OE in any capacity. This includes but is not limited to employees, directors, officers, coaches, Athletes, Officials, volunteers and Members of OE. OE encourages reporting of all incidents of Harassment, regardless of who may be the offender.

4. STANDARD OF CONDUCT

All individuals affiliated with OE are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect;
- Conduct themselves in a professional, inclusive, and ethical manner;
- Refrain from any behaviour that could be perceived as Harassment, Discrimination, Bullying, or abuse;
- Avoid retaliation or reprisal against individuals who make a complaint or participate in an investigation.

Individuals in positions of authority, including coaches, Officials, administrators, and supervisors, have a heightened responsibility to model respectful behaviour and protect others from harm, particularly individuals in vulnerable or subordinate positions.

5. REPORTING PROCEDURES

5.1 Reporting an Incident

- Any person may report a suspected incident of Harassment to:
 - A person in authority (e.g., coach, Official, Board member);
 - The Executive Director of OE;
 - By email to complaints@ontarioequestrian.ca, or
 - An external reporting service, if established by OE.
- Reports must be made in writing.
- Reports submitted must contain the following:
 - a) Complainant's contact information including full name, phone number and email, or the Complainant's counsel or authorized representative;
 - b) Name(s) of Respondent(s), any witnesses, or any other parties involved;
 - c) Date, location, and description of the incident;
 - d) Supporting evidence, if any;
 - e) Information on whether the matter is before another tribunal or authority.
- Anonymous complaints may be investigated at OE's discretion.

Minor infractions that are not considered serious by the complainant or the person to whom they are initially reported may be dealt with summarily by an appropriate person, such as a coach or Official, having

authority over the Member whose conduct is being reported. All complaints of a more serious nature will be forwarded to the Executive Director who will bring them to the Governance Committee. An accused will be informed immediately that a complaint has been made against him or her.

5.2 TIMELINESS

Complaints should be filed as soon as possible following the alleged incident. Delays in reporting may hinder a fair and thorough investigation.

5.3 MINORS

Where a minor is involved as a complainant or respondent, a parent or guardian must be notified (subject to legal reporting requirements), and all interviews involving minors must be conducted with a parent or guardian present or with their consent.

6. INVESTIGATION PROCESS

a) Preliminary Review

Upon receiving a complaint, the OE Executive Director (or designate) will conduct a preliminary review to assess:

- Whether the matter falls within the scope of this Policy;
- Whether the complaint is frivolous, vexatious, or made in bad faith.

If the complaint proceeds, a Fact-Finder or Investigator, internal or external, will be appointed to gather statements, interview relevant parties, and compile a summary of findings.

b) Governance Committee Review

The Governance Committee will review the findings to determine:

- Whether the complaint can be resolved informally;
- Whether a hearing is required under OE's *Discipline and Complaints Policy*;
- Whether external legal or human rights advice is required.

Appropriate steps and actions to address the complaint will be decided after the Governance Committee determination is made.

7. INTERIM MEASURES

In addition to the Policy outlined in the Discipline and Complaints Policy, OE may impose interim measures to ensure safety and maintain the integrity of the process. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Temporary suspension from OE activities;
- No-contact directives;
- Restricted access to facilities or events.

Interim measures are precautionary and do not imply guilt.

8. DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

If a finding of Harassment is made, disciplinary measures may be imposed in accordance with OE's Discipline and Complaints Policy. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

- Written warning or reprimand;
- Mandatory training or education;
- Suspension from certain activities or roles;
- Termination of employment or expulsion from membership;
- Notification to external authorities, including Equestrian Canada or law enforcement.

9. RELUCTANT COMPLAINANT

Where a person who makes a complaint decides later to withdraw it, the Dispute Resolution Officer will review the situation and decide whether to continue the process. The process will be continued if the facts indicate that Harassment or abuse occurred as failure to do so may result in liability for OE.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY

OE is committed to protecting the confidentiality of all individuals involved in a Harassment complaint, including the complainant, respondent, and witnesses. All information will be handled sensitively and shared only on a need-to-know basis, unless disclosure is required by law (e.g., mandatory reporting, health and safety obligations).

Public disclosure of outcomes may occur where necessary for transparency, especially in cases involving serious misconduct.

11. RIGHTS OF THE COMPLAINANT AND RESPONDENT

Both the Complainant and Respondent have the right to:

- Be treated with dignity and respect;
- Participate fully in the investigation and hearing process;
- Be informed of the allegations and have the opportunity to respond;
- Be accompanied by a support person, legal counsel, or advisor at their own expense;
- Receive written notice of any findings and sanctions.

12. PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION

OE strictly prohibits retaliation against any individual for:

- Making a good faith complaint;
- Participating in an investigation or hearing;
- Supporting someone involved in the process.

Any retaliatory behaviour will be subject to disciplinary action under this or another applicable OE policy.

13. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

This Policy does not restrict any individual's right to:

- File a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission;
- Seek remedies through the civil or criminal justice system;
- Report suspected abuse to the Children's Aid Society or police, where legally required.

Where criminal or child protection matters are involved, OE will suspend internal processes until external authorities conclude their investigations, unless safety requires earlier action.

14. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND TRAINING

All OE personnel, including Board members, coaches, staff, and volunteers, are responsible for understanding and implementing this Policy. OE will:

- Provide training and education to support compliance;
- Regularly review procedures for handling complaints;
- Ensure access to Safe Sport resources and support mechanisms.

This Policy serves as a framework for dealing with harassment and related misconduct but does not cover every situation. If you are unclear about the requirements of this Policy, please contact the Executive Director at OE as follows:

Ontario Equestrian

320 Harry Walker Parkway North

Unit 2

Newmarket, ON L3Y 7B8

905.709.6545

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