

**HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY  
NASHVILLE WOMEN'S RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB  
ADOPTED: DECEMBER 31, 2019**

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**SECTION 1: PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT**

The Nashville Women's Rugby Football Club (NWRFC) is committed to creating and providing a sport and social environment that is respectful and inclusive. All NWRFC players, coaches, and social members are expected to treat and be treated with respect and dignity, free from harassment or discrimination of any nature, as defined in the next section of this document. The NWRFC welcomes individuals from all backgrounds and seeks to create an environment of inclusion regardless of race/ethnicity, economic status, gender identification, or sexual preference. The goal of this policy is to ensure that we as a club will build and maintain a culture that we are proud of and that is safe for our members and associates.

To uphold this culture, any form of slurs, derogatory epithets, harassment (physical or emotional), violence (physical or sexual) or any other harmful words or acts will not be tolerated. This document will detail the system for reporting, the investigation methods and the potential consequences for these actions. The Executive Council members involved shall maintain a commitment to addressing the victim's needs throughout this process of investigation, discipline, reparation, and rehabilitation. These processes and expectations apply consistently to all club members and nonmembers, including but not limited to coaches, huggers, fans, referees, and members of opposing teams whether they are the offenders or victims, in any situation where the victim and offender would continue to interact in club spaces. Executive Council members are always representing the club and should always seek to uphold this culture. All parties are expected to continue the NWRFC tradition of fostering a welcoming community of respect on and off the pitch.

This document will abide by, and expand upon, USA Rugby's [SafeSport](#) initiative and practices. SafeSport is the US Olympic Committee's program to protect athletes and participants from abuse and misconduct through educational materials for the Club's authoritative leaders. SafeSport is also a platform to report instances of abuse and misconduct that go beyond the scope of this policy.

This document shall be made public and remain easily accessible so that anyone who wishes to engage with NWRFC, both in the sport or social context, may understand the conduct expected of all parties involved and the consequences for actions that do not align with the culture we wish to build and maintain.

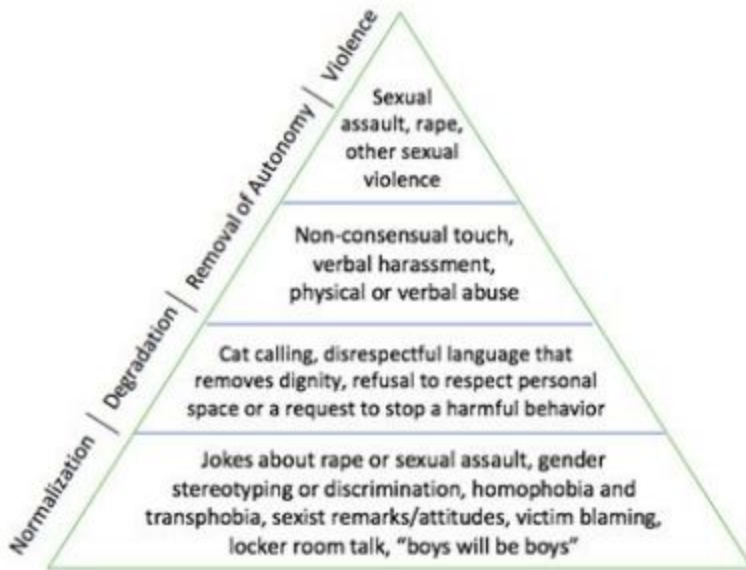
## **SECTION 2: DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Discrimination	Discrimination refers to any conduct, whether intentional or not, which has the effect of imposing burdens, obligations or disadvantages on an individual that are not imposed on others, or which withholds or limits access to opportunities, benefits and advantages available to others.
Harassment Repeated	and/or severe conduct that causes fear, humiliation or annoyance, offends or degrades, creates a hostile environment, or reflects discriminatory bias in an attempt to establish dominance, superiority, or power over an individual athlete or group based on age, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, national origin, or mental or physical disability; or any act or conduct described as harassment under federal or state law. Whether conduct is harassing depends on the totality of the circumstances, including the nature, frequency, intensity, location, context and duration of the behavior.
Physical Misconduct	Any contact or non-contact conduct that causes or reasonably threatens to cause physical harm to another person. Examples include, but are not limited to: punching, beating, choking, and encouraging an athlete to return to play prematurely following a serious injury.
Emotional Misconduct	Repeated and/or severe non-contact behavior involving Verbal Acts, Physical Acts and/or Acts that Deny Attention. Emotional Misconduct is determined by the objective behaviors, not whether harm is intended or results from the behavior: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Verbal Acts - Verbal assault that attacks someone personally, repeatedly and excessively yelling at a person in a manner that serves no productive training or motivational purpose. Examples include, but are not limited to: calling someone worthless, disgusting, or cyberbullying.</li><li>● Physical Acts - Physically aggressive behaviors, such as throwing sport equipment, water bottles or chairs at or in the presence of others; punching walls, windows or other objects.</li><li>● Acts that Deny Attention - Ignoring or isolating a person for extended periods of time</li></ul>
Sexual Harassment	Conduct that includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical behaviors of a sexual nature; or is sufficiently severe, persistent or pervasive and objectively offensive that it negatively affects an individual's performance

**Sexual Assault** Any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient. Sexual assault can include, but is not limited to, sexual activities such as rape, attempted rape.

### Pyramid of Sexual Misconduct

The Pyramid of Sexual Misconduct attempts to illustrate the continuum of the culture of sexual violence that escalates from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. This diagram shows how language and things that could be seen as normal can create stereotypes that lead to violence. It is not meant to be all-inclusive, but rather serves as a point of reference:



**Consent** Freely given agreement by all people involved. As it relates to Sexual Conduct, Consent requires words or actions by a person who is legally and functionally competent to give informed permission for specific sexual activity. Consent to any one form of sexual activity does not automatically imply Consent for any other forms of sexual activity. Previous relationships or prior consent does not imply consent to future sexual activity. Once given, Consent can be withdrawn through clear communication. For more information on what consent looks like, go [here](#).

**Bystander Intervention** Bystander Intervention is used to describe a situation where someone who isn't directly involved steps in to change the outcome. Stepping in may give the person of concern a chance to get to a safe place or leave the situation. In reference to the Pyramid above, bystander intervention can be a means to de-escalate both a moment of harassment, as well as the potential for progression through the stages of sexual misconduct. For more information and

examples on what bystander intervention looks like, go [here](#).

## Process of Accountability

It is expected that the offender be held accountable for their actions and prevented from shifting blame onto the victim. We expect that the offender own their assaultive behavior and understand the full ramifications their actions have and will continue to have on the victim and the community. If the offender moves to a new team, they must continue to comply with accountability guidelines and determined consequences. For more information and examples on what community accountability looks like, go [here](#).

## **SECTION 3: CONFIDENTIALITY**

The NWRFC recognizes the sensitive nature of discrimination and harassment and will keep all matters relating to a complaint confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation, discipline process or other mechanism to resolve the matter. However, if required by law to disclose information, the NWRFC will do so. In accordance with the victim's wishes, the amount of information reported to the rest of the club will be determined on a case by case basis in order to stymie false information and maintain a safe environment.

## **SECTION 4: NO RETALIATION FOR GOOD FAITH REPORTS**

Anyone filing a complaint alleging discrimination or harassment must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds for filing the complaint. Making allegations that prove to be unsubstantiated and that prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false could result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the club.

The complainant shall not be penalized, either directly or indirectly, and no form of reprisal will be tolerated against an individual who files a complaint or participates in this complaint procedure in good faith.

## **SECTION 5: REPORTING**

All members and nonmembers of the NWRFC may file a report regarding an incident of misconduct by any other member or nonmember. A report can be filed via the club email, [nashvillewomensrugby@gmail.com](mailto:nashvillewomensrugby@gmail.com). Any report can be made based on comfort level of the reporter. The form may be filled out to the reporter's comfort level to include when, where, who, what, and name of reporter and contact information. Any report submitted via the form will be submitted directly to the President. Any reporter can also file a report by privately bringing an issue directly to any Executive Council member.

## **SECTION 6: INVESTIGATION**

Once the report is received, immediate action will be taken by the President to assure the victim that their needs and concerns are being taken seriously and discuss what the process will be moving forward. The needs and concerns of the victim will be taken into consideration when determining the specific process. Upon receipt of the report and completion of the victim outreach, if possible, the President will screen the reported facts involved to determine if the incident meets the definition of one of the actions identified in this policy. At this point, maintaining the necessary level of confidentiality for the victim, the President will report to the rest of the Executive Council with the facts of the report on an as needed basis. The Executive Council will always be made aware that a report was made, even if no other details are to be shared. Should the incident meet an above mentioned definition, then a Committee comprised of the President, Vice President, and a third designated Executive Council member (who will be voted into the position at the beginning of each arising case by the rest of the Executive Council) will proceed to take further investigative action.

Investigative action may include a meeting with the offender and interviews with any potential witnesses. A written statement by the Committee with final findings and recommendations will be issued to both the victim and offender. It will also be saved in a confidential President's file for future reference. The statement and any recommendations suggesting disciplinary action will be submitted to the Executive Council for further determination.

Should any member of the Committee be the subject of the accusations or seen to be placed in a conflict of interest, the following Executive Council members will be tasked with the investigation process, in descending order until no conflict is identified:

- Treasurer
- Match Secretary
- Fundraising Chair
- Captain
- Co-Captain

Should the allegations contained in the report be criminal in nature, the proper legal authorities may be notified accordingly.

Should the allegations reference a coach, referee, or player, the NWRFC reserves the right to file a report with USA Rugby or other relevant rugby organizations.

The NWRFC reserves the right to end the investigation by the request of the victim.

## **SECTION 7: CONSEQUENCES**

The statement with official findings will be reviewed by the Executive Council. The Executive Council will address the severity of the incident and act in all parties' best interests to choose the appropriate consequences. In determining the appropriate consequences, the Executive Council (excluding any

Executive Council member with a conflict of interest) will vote and must have 3/4 approval to move forward. Once consequences have been determined, a minimum of two Executive Council members will communicate them to the offender and victim. If consequences involve loss of playing time, a captain must be present during communication. The focus of these consequences is not punitive; the NWRFC wants to provide opportunities to grow and learn for the offender while still being held accountable for their actions.

The escalation of consequences includes but is not limited to:

- Executive Council members give a verbal warning to the offender that they will be observed for continued patterns of harassment
- Executive Council members work with offender and victim to create a safety plan moving forward
- Education for the offender including anger management, consent, substance-abuse awareness, or anything that could be helpful in accountability moving forward
- Potential Loss of Privileges including but not limited to:
  - Decreased playing time, in which a captain will assist in determining
  - Temporary suspension from team and/or social functions
  - Seasonal probation from team and/or social functions
  - Permanent expulsion from team and/or social functions

If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the reporter, victim, or offender, they should file a formal, written complaint to the Executive Council within seven (7) days of receiving the final findings statement.

## **SECTION 8: CARE FOR VICTIM**

Knowing that every step for the victim can be emotional, the NWRFC is committed to caring for the victim and providing support during the healing process. The Executive Council will always follow through if contact information is provided in reports. If the victim is comfortable with sharing their contact information, a Executive Council member will promptly reach out to the victim and ensure they feel safe.

It is the contacting Executive Council member's duty to listen to the victim, provide for, and reiterate the victim's needs (anonymous if desired) to the rest of the Executive Council if needed in order to fulfill their healing. Amount of support and which avenues to provide that support is the victim's choice. The Executive Council member will use all efforts to maintain confidentiality yet keep the victim updated on the NWRFC efforts.

The Executive Council promises to seek continual education and improve care initiatives for victims. The Executive Council members involved are required to take relevant training such as but not limited to the SafeSport modules to best provide emotional support.

## SECTION 9: REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

[USA Rugby SafeSport](#) SafeSport is the US Olympic Committee's program to protect athletes and participants from abuse and misconduct through educational materials for the Club's authoritative leaders. SafeSport is also a platform to report instances of abuse and misconduct that go beyond the scope of this policy.

[RAINN](#) RAINN is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. This website includes education on consent, bystander intervention, care for a victim and more, as well as resources and a support hotline for victims.

[The Revolution Starts at Home](#)

A zine committed to confronting partner abuse in a community setting. It presents a guide for community accountability, which is the general belief that by working with both the victim and offender in the healing process, the entire community becomes safer.

[Safe Outside](#) Safe Outside is an independent grassroots initiative designed to combat sexual harassment and sexual assault in the climbing and outdoor community. Their mission, data collection efforts, and educational materials align with the mission of this document and provide additional resources for creating safe spaces in co-ed outdoor athletic environments.

[Creative Interventions](#) Creative Interventions is a website dedicated to re/envisioning solutions to domestic or intimate partner, sexual, family and other forms of interpersonal violence. Their toolkit contains a basic model for violence intervention, useful information, worksheets, and more.