



## Spokane Soccer Academy (SSA) Official Abuse and Bullying Policy

Spokane Soccer Academy (SSA) is committed to protecting the athletes that join us for academy. And so, SSA has adopted an official Abuse and Bullying Policy. This policy defines abuse and bullying in a sports-related environment; who could be involved in abuse/bullying and the solutions to any situation; how SSA will handle a situation involving abuse or bullying; and the accurate certifications that are required of the coaches and mentors at SSA. SSA wants all of the athletes participating in a safe way and to feel comfortable as they train.

### Abuse Protocol

1. In a sports-related environment, abuse refers to any behavior-physical, emotional, psychological, or sexual—that causes harm, distress, or exploitation of an athlete by a coach, mentor, teammate, or other individual. This can include:
  - a. **Physical abuse:** Unnecessary or excessive force, overtraining, or unsafe practices.
  - b. **Emotional/psychological abuse:** Verbal insults, threats, humiliation, or manipulation that undermine an athlete's confidence or mental health.
  - c. **Sexual abuse:** Any unwanted or inappropriate sexual contact, advances, or exploitation.
  - d. **Neglect:** Failing to provide appropriate support, supervision, or care necessary for the athlete's safety and development.

Abuse in sports can be overt or subtle and often occurs in environments where power imbalances exist and go unchallenged. SSA is committed to being aware of the possible abuse that can occur and ensuring that no child/athlete/coach at SSA experiences any form of abuse. SSA is careful to check on children/athletes that are working too hard (especially in hot weather) and giving athletes extra breaks if needed.

2. Abuse at soccer training can involve coaches, mentors, players, and anyone involved with SSA. No matter who is involved, SSA wants to be made aware of any signs or concerns parents/guardians have. Please contact Kevin Moon immediately if you are concerned about abuse symptoms at SSA.

3. What is the specific training from SafeSport that coaches receive? The coaches are required to complete this training before starting their employment with SSA and it is also required to repeat each year. Background checks are required for any employee of SSA whether or not they are a coach or a mentor. Do we need to include the “scope” of the background check and acknowledge everything it includes?

## **Bullying Protocol**

1. StopBullying.gov defines bullying as “unwanted, aggressive behavior among children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.” There are also different kinds of bullying including verbal bullying, social bullying, and physical bullying. ALL kinds of bullying are forbidden from SSA. SSA hopes to embody attributes among players at the Academy that promote teamwork, lifting each other up, and healthy competition.
2. Symptoms of bullying vary from child to child. Coaches and parents should be aware of possible signs indicating that bullying may be taking place. Some children may be comfortable enough to speak up for themselves, some may not, due to fear. A comprehensive list of [Warning Signs for Bullying](#) is included from StopBullying.gov. Please make a coach from SSA aware if you are concerned of bullying symptoms.
3. Consequences of Bullying
  - a. If a coach, mentor, or parent notices bullying happened at SSA, an attempt will first be made to encourage the bully (or bullies) to change their behavior by a coach, mentor, or a parent. If the situation calls for it, there will also be an attempt made by the coach, manager, or parent(s) to reconcile the situation between players (age and level of maturity and or severity of offense must be considered).
  - b. If the bullying persists, disciplinary action against a player may be taken by the team coach and/or SSA Owner, Kevin Moon, which may include, but is not limited to, immediate suspension from participation in practices or game(s) for a period of time and parents will be notified.
  - c. After the incident has been investigated and addressed, the situation will continue to be monitored by the respective coach and players' parents to ensure the problem is resolved.