

# **TURNPIKE BASKETBALL CLUB, INC.**

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

We at Turnpike Basketball Club, Inc. (“Turnpike”) are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all basketball participants so they can learn the game of basketball and the skills necessary to participate in the game in a fun, positive and secure atmosphere. Turnpike Board members, coaches, volunteers, participants, and parents have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance. Not all joking or horseplay is bullying, but when the intent or effect is to cause distress, repetition of such behavior is bullying and will not be tolerated by Turnpike.

**Objectives of this Policy** – As a Club, we take bullying very seriously. Bullying will not be tolerated at any practices, games or other Turnpike-sanctioned events. All Turnpike Board members, coaches, players and parents should have a clear understanding of what bullying is and the responsibilities inherent in this policy:

- All Turnpike Board members should be familiar with the Turnpike Anti-Bullying Policy each year and be made aware of the procedures to follow when bullying is reported.
- Coaches shall ensure that all players and parents are provided a copy of this Turnpike Anti-Bullying Policy and shall discuss the important points of the policy each year during the respective Coaches’ Meeting. All players and parents should understand what they should do to report incidents involving bullying.
- Players and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

**Definition of Bullying** – The Code of Virginia at § 22.1-276.01 defines bullying as any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. ‘Bullying’ includes cyber bullying. ‘Bullying’ does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict.

Turnpike Basketball Club, Inc. (“Turnpike”) adopts the definition of bullying as stated in the Code of Virginia and expounds upon it for further clarification to ensure an anti-bullying learning environment is maintained in all Turnpike games, practices, clinics and activities. Bullying can be:

- Physical – including pushing, hitting, or kicking a person or interfering with their property.
- Verbal – including the use of words or gestures to hurt or humiliate another person, including name-calling, racial or derogatory insults and teasing.
- Emotional – involving rejection, terrorizing, extorting, humiliating, rating/ranking personal characteristics such as race, disability, ethnicity, or perceived sexual orientation.
- Online – cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or offensive content about someone else, as well as sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation.

- Sexual – including sexual unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments, or homophobic remarks or focusing on the issue of sexuality

### **Procedures for Parents, Coaches and Board Members**

1. Bullying or threats of bullying must be stopped immediately.
2. Parents should report bullying incidents to the team coach, commissioner or any Turnpike Board member.
3. In cases of bullying, the coach or board member who was contacted shall submit a written report outlining the reported bullying behavior to the Turnpike Executive Committee. If necessary and appropriate, police may be consulted.
4. In all reported cases bullying, the parents or guardian of the player who was bullied shall be informed immediately and may be asked to meet with the respective team coach, commissioner, and/or Board member to discuss the incident. In all cases, strict confidentiality shall be maintained.
5. The parents or guardian of any player who is reported to be bullying will be contacted immediately by the respective team coach and/or commissioner and asked to meet to discuss the incident. Depending on the severity of the situation, the parents may be asked to meet with representatives of the Turnpike Board.

**Consequences of Bullying** – Any and all incidents of reported bullying, whether first offense or other, deemed minor or severe, shall be reported to the Turnpike Board immediately and in writing within 24 hours.

1. First Offense:
  - Depending on the severity of the incident, in a first offense situation involving bullying, an attempt will be made to encourage the bully (bullies) to modify their behavior for their benefit, for the benefit of the person bullied and other team members.
  - The bully (or bullies) will be asked to genuinely apologize to those players affected, including all team members.
  - An attempt will be made by the coach, manager, or parent to reconcile the situation between the players (Age and level of maturity and or severity of offense must be considered).
  - Other consequences or disciplinary alternatives to stop the bullying may also be considered by the Turnpike Board once reported by the parent, coach or manager.
2. Further Offenses:
  - In cases of persistent bullying, disciplinary action against a player may be taken by the team coach and/or Turnpike Board which may include, but are not limited to, immediate suspension from participation in the basketball practice or game(s) for a period of time.
  - The Board reserves the right to suspend or otherwise discipline any player for bullying in addition to any action taken by the coach.
  - In severe cases, the Board reserves the right to prohibit further participation in the basketball program by any player deemed to be involved in the bullying other players.

3. After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, the situation will continue to be monitored by the respective team coach and player parents to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

**Player Education** – Coaches are encouraged to discuss the problems of bullying openly with their players. Players should be encouraged to do the following to stop and discourage bullying tactics:

1. Players should tell their parents.
2. If a player is bullied at basketball practice/games, they should be encouraged to immediately tell their team coach. The player should be reassured that no consequences will result to them for coming forward. If necessary, players should write down what happened, when it happened, and identify who bullied them.
3. If players are concerned or nervous about coming forward, they should be encouraged to talk with a friend or teammate. Team leaders should be encouraged to intervene in any bullying situation.
4. Players should be encouraged to not fight back when confronted by a bully. They should calmly tell the player to stop, or say nothing and walk away. Again, they should report the incident to their team coach.

**Signs and Symptoms** – A child may indicate he or she is being bullied through various signs and symptoms. While some children are prone to report bullying to their parents, coaches or adults, others will not, due to fear, intimidation or other factors.

Coaches and parents should be aware of the following possible signs indicating that bullying may be taking place prompting them to investigate further and/or share their concerns with coaches or Turnpike Board members. The child:

- is frightened or unwilling to attend practice
- doesn't care to associate with team members
- asks to be picked up promptly from practice
- changes their usual routine
- feigns illness prior to practice or game time
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with missing or damaged equipment or clothing
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviors could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

*Adopted by the Turnpike Board of Directors: April 7, 2019*