

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our players so that they can enjoy football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our Club. If bullying does occur, all players should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING Club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a Club Officer

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the continual use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person.

Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding kit, threatening gestures)

Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence

Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality

Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Players who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

The Club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All Managers, coaches, helpers, players and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All Managers, coaches and helpers should know what the Club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All players and parents should know what the Club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a Club we take bullying seriously. Players and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is unwilling to go to football
- begins missing training or matches
- starts to distance themselves from rest of team
- begins to perform poorly at training or in matches
- comes home with clothes torn or kit damaged
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- feigns injury
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- asks to be driven to football by own parent instead of lift sharing
- has subs or other monies continually "lost"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- is bullying other children or siblings
- changes their usual routine
- has possessions go "missing"
- starts stammering
- feels ill in the morning
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- appetite affected
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

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

Procedures

- Report bullying incidents to Manager or Coach.
- In the case where a Manager or Coach is thought to be bullying it should be brought to the attention of a Club Committee Member.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
- Talk to the victim giving them the time and opportunity to speak
- Talk to the bully not immediately but after a short period of time. This will make them less defensive.
- If the bullying is carried out by a group then talk to them as a group
- Carry out follow up meetings with both the victim and the bully (bullies)
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by the Club
- In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted

Outcomes

The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.

In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered

If possible, the players will be reconciled.

After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Prevention

We will work towards KIDSCAPE methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- writing a set of Club or team rules
- signing a behaviour contract
- encouraging the players to talk about bullying amongst themselves
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters