



Anti-Bullying Policy

1 Introduction

“Bullying is never acceptable; it doesn’t make a child or protected adult better or stronger to get through it and it should never be seen as a normal part of growing up.” (respectme 2015)

2 Principles

- Players have a right to learn free from intimidation and fear.
- All club players have a right to play and work in a secure and caring environment.
- Ayrshire Tigers PFC are completely opposed to and will not tolerate bullying behaviour.
- Bullied players will be listened to.
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

3 What is Bullying?

Bullying is an act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms; physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of people.

Prejudice-based bullying is when bullying behaviour is motivated by prejudice based on an individual’s actual or perceived identity and can be based on characteristics unique to an individual identity or circumstance e.g. their ethnicity or religion or sexuality. When the bullying behaviour is as a result of prejudice, there is a need to address the root cause of the prejudice as well as effectively responding to incidents as they arise.

4 Forms of Bullying

- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at other players.
- Interfering with another player’s property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it.
- Using offensive names when addressing another player.
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another player or his/her family.
- Belittling another player’s abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another player.
- Excluding another player from a group activity.
- Ridiculing another player’s appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.
- Misusing technology (internet or mobiles) to hurt or humiliate another person.

5 Links with other Club Policies

Safeguarding Policy, Child Protection, Protected Adults, Zero Tolerance, Equal Opportunities, Welfare, Complaints and Codes of Conduct.



6 Participation and Consultation Process

- Awareness raising programmes (presentation evenings and national campaigns)
- Survey/questionnaires distributed to players, parents and whole club staff.
- Obtaining the views of elected players/parents representatives
- Seeking the views of parents at presentation evenings.
- Monitoring evaluation and review.

7 How to Recognise Bullying Behaviour

The club appreciates that bullying behaviour can be difficult to identify because it often happens away from others and children may be reluctant to tell adults for fear of repercussions or an 'over-reaction' by adults. This section provides guidance for club officials, volunteers and coaches to recognise 'signs' of bullying behaviour and understand the impact that it can have on the child or even a protected adult who is being bullied. It sets out how staff, volunteers or coaches should respond should they have any concerns about bullying behaviour.

7.1 Bullying behaviour can include:

- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened (face to face and/or online)
- Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked
- Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you (face to face and/or online)
- Having belongings, including money, taken or damaged
- Sending abusive messages, pictures or images on social media, online gaming platforms or by phone
- Behaviour which makes people feel like they are not in control of themselves or their lives
- Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be

7.2 The impact can include:

- Reluctance to attend training or get involved at the club
- Performance can be hindered or the player may show a lack of interest
- Change in behaviour when around particular people at the club e.g. being more withdrawn or appearing fearful
- Change in behaviour in general e.g. may appear more anxious or more guarded
- Unexpected absences at training and/or matches
- Unexplained injuries – this may include injuries which have been self-inflicted as a means of coping
- The player saying they have lost or misplaced items

When talking about bullying, it's never helpful to label player's as 'bullies' or 'victims'. Labels can stick for life and can isolate a player, rather than helping them to recover or change their behaviour. It is preferable to talk about someone displaying bullying behaviour rather than label them a 'bully' – behaviour can be changed with help and support.



8 Responsibilities of all Stakeholders

8.1 The Responsibilities of Coaches/Volunteers/Club Officials

Our staff will

- Foster in our player's self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our players.
- Discuss bullying with all age groups, so that every player learns about the damage it causes to both the child/protected adult who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling an appropriate adult about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to players who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to Club Safeguarding Officer.
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

8.2 The Responsibilities of Players

We expect our players to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the player who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a coach or club official any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

8.3 The Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

We ask parents/carers to support their children/protected adults and the club by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children/protected adult, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children/protected adults to report any bullying to the Club Safeguarding Officer and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other players.
- Advising their children/protected adults not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children/protected adults, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- Informing the club of any suspected bullying, even if their children/protected adults are not involved;
- Co-operating with the club, if their children/protected adults are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth. And point out the implications of bullying, both for the children/protected adults who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.



8.4 The Responsibilities of All

Everyone should work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

9 Procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

Steps taken to support and respond to the needs of both bullied and bullying players.

- Records kept
- Action which may be taken
 - Contacting parents/carers of all players concerned in the bullying incident.
 - Investigation.
 - Feedback to those concerned.
 - Sanctions.

10 How to Create the Right Environment:

Environments that promote respect, celebrate difference and encourage positive relationships and behaviour are less likely to see bullying as acceptable behaviour. Creating the right environment can discourage bullying behaviour and encourage players to share any concerns. Below are some of the things the club will try to do:

- Cultivate an ethos where there is an anti-bullying culture – it is especially important that adults are good role models.
- Take all signs and reports of bullying seriously
- Take all allegations seriously and take action to ensure that the player is safe
- Will not label players as “victims” and “bullies”. Talk about ‘bullying
- Respond to each incident of bullying behaviour individually and adopt practices to find the most effective response
- Encourage all players to speak and share their concerns with a coach, club official etc
- Have posters and signposting of local support services visible
- Help and support the player to change their behaviour and to understand and recognise its impact
- Speak to those being bullied and those displaying bullying behaviour separately

11 How to Respond to Bullying Behaviour

When responding to incidents or accusations of bullying behaviour the approach should be to ask:

- What was the behaviour?
- What impact did it have?
- What do I need to do about it?
- What attitudes prejudices or other factors have influenced the behaviour?
- What does the player who has been bullied want to happen?

NEVER allow bullying behaviour, in any form, to go unchallenged and unreported.



12 What to do when bullying incidents and behaviour occurs:

How to support the player who is being bullied:

- Listen to and give the player your full attention, exploring options together of what you can do to help.
- Reassure the player reporting the bullying that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no-one else.
- Explain what will happen next and how they are going to be kept informed.
- Be clear that online bullying behaviour will be treated as seriously as any other form of bullying behaviour
- Report any concerns to Scottish Para-Football or the SPFA by completing the Concern Recording Form. This should include a record of what was said.

In cases of online/electronic bullying advise players who are being bullied by text, email or online:

- to report the behaviour to the social media site and retain the communication e.g. a screenshot or to print it out
- check their privacy settings to ensure their account is private and that no one can post on their page without them accepting the post

Players who are exhibiting bullying behaviour will need help and support to:

- Talk with the player who has been displaying bullying behaviour. Explain the situation and try to get them to understand the consequences of their behaviour
- Identify the feelings that cause them to act this way and develop alternative ways of responding to these feelings
- Encourage and support those displaying bullying behaviour to change this behaviour. Ask them to consider the impact their actions are having on the other person
- Aim to restore positive relationships. In some cases it might be worth considering seeking an apology from those involved in bullying behaviour (for example where those on the receiving end wish reconciliation). However, apologies are only of real value when they are genuine.
- Be sensitive and use good judgement when it comes to informing the parents/carers of those whose negative behaviour is impacting on others. Put the player at the centre – will telling the parents/carers result in more problems for the player? What are the player's views on parents/carers knowing? If in any doubt seek advice from the governing body before responding
- Only consider imposing consequences as necessary to ensure the safety of players, e.g. exclusion from the team or particular activity until behaviour standards are improved.

13 Victim Support

The club will seek to provide additional assistance to victims by contacting outside agencies who will provide specialist advice and support, with the staff member's permission.

The club will provide additional support to victims of harassment, until the case is resolved. Wherever possible, the club will ensure that Club officials are available to support victims if they so wish.

14 Police Involvement

The club will encourage and support victims to report acts of harassment to the Police. This support may include writing or telephoning the Police on behalf of the staff member, as well as attending meetings with the Police.



The club will report incidents of harassment to the Police where there is a clear threat to the safety of other staff or the general public.

15 Confidentiality

The club will respect and maintain the confidentiality of matters concerning the players, employees, and volunteers and of any members of the public giving information in a harassment case.

These guidelines have been informed and developed with support from respectme, their publication 'Bullying in Scotland 2014' and the Respect for All: National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People, Scottish Government 2017. Copyright remains with respectme and we acknowledge all and any material taken from www.respectme.org.uk

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23.07.2020