

**TOGHER  
ATHLECTICS CLUB**

**ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**



**Adapted from:**

**Swim Ireland, Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures, 2014**

# CLUB ANTI-BULLYING COMMITMENT TO MEMBERS

THE CLUB ANTI-BULLYING COMMITMENT AIMS TO PREVENT BULLYING BEHAVIOUR, WHICH IS DESCRIBED AS THE REPEATED AND INTENTIONAL USE OF POWER OR AGGRESSION TO HARM, HURT OR ADVERSELY AFFECT THE RIGHTS AND NEEDS OF OTHERS

Bullying behaviour is NOT ACCEPTABLE in our club – we have a ZERO TOLERANCE to bullying behaviour

EVERYONE is expected to BEHAVE according to our code of conduct

It is OK TO TELL someone about bullying behaviour; WE WILL LISTEN AND HELP STOP the behaviour.

We want members to feel SAFE and SECURE in this club.

We will SUPPORT members to help STOP bullying behaviour.

EVERYONE in the club will sign up to this commitment.

If you see bullying behaviour or if you are being bullied tell someone you trust like your coach, the child welfare officer, other club officer, your parent or a friend.

**HELP KEEP THE CLUB FREE FROM  
BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

# Anti-bullying

The Anti-Bullying Policy applies to all club members – young people, parents, coaches and any others who help and assist with club activities.

It is the responsibility of everyone in the club to put this Anti-Bullying Policy in place and to sign up to the club Anti-Bullying Commitment to help the club to be a safe, enjoyable place for all members in the club.

The Club Child Welfare Officer will discuss the policy and the Club Anti-Bullying Commitment with the young people in the club.

## WHAT IS MEANT BY BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?

Bullying behaviour can be described as the repeated and intentional use of power or aggression by one or more persons to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another individual or group.

Someone can be the target of bullying behaviour at any time and via a variety of methods i.e. online contact such as social media sites, being physically or verbally harmed such as face to face contact, through text or other messaging services, etc.

*ANY FORM OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IS BREACHING OUR CLUB'S CODE OF CONDUCT.*

## TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

**CYBER:** involves the use of technology via texting, messaging, photographs, social media, etc.; a message may only be posted once, however it becomes bullying behaviour because of the repeated viewings; also young people are easily accessible via phone or computer, so bullying behaviour can continue outside the club environment.

**EXCLUSION:** this may take several forms; the bullying behaviour may be less obvious than someone simply being left out of an activity. For example: a group may appear to involve someone but then regularly choose to exclude them within the group activity; a group pass on misinformation so someone gets wrong messages about an activity, turning up too early/late or in the wrong gear etc.

**EXTORTION:** involves regularly extracting something from a person without returning the favour', e.g. borrowing goggles/equipment, money, snacks, drinks etc.; this becomes bullying behaviour when nothing is given in return, i.e. the relationship is not two way; this type of behaviour may also include forcing someone to change their performance, i.e. losing on purpose, or not training well.

**GESTURE:** this can involve any sort of gesture, a look, a signal, pulling a face or even the way someone stands; this behaviour between young people may not be apparent or meaningful to anyone other than the people involved. Physical: this is something physically done to a person, it does not need to cause physical harm, e.g. hiding someone's bag or elbowing someone running next to you.

**VERBAL:** involves something someone says to another person, e.g. gossiping, telling lies or calling someone names, etc.; this can include the tone used when speaking to someone e.g. sarcastically or shouting. Bullying will usually involve a number of types of behaviour and the issues may, when viewed as individual incidents, seem petty or inconsequential. However, for the person on the receiving end the bullying behaviour is a hurtful series of happenings. It is important to have knowledge of the different types of behaviour to better deal with issue of bullying in the club. Often identifying bullying behaviour is about being observant to the behaviours of others. This helps too in differentiating between bullying behaviour and banter, i.e. to observe if the behaviour is a two way communication as between friends or peer individuals where there is a balance of power between those involved; or if the behaviour is directed one way with the influence and power being one sided.

# HOW TO PREVENT BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The code of conduct describes how to behave. To prevent bullying behaviour everyone must:

- > **Know the code of conduct** and what it means; all club members must sign their code of conduct every year.
- > **Sign the Club Anti-Bullying Commitment**; a copy of the Anti-Bullying Policy is available to every member
- > **Be responsible** for helping to prevent and stop any bullying behaviour; it is the right thing to do to tell about bullying behaviour.

Young people in the club should know who the Club Child Welfare Officer is and how to contact them; by telling someone you trust about bullying behaviour, such as the child welfare officer or your coach, they can help it stop.

# PEOPLE INVOLVED IN BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

There may be a number of people who are involved in the bullying behaviour or people who have seen or heard about what is happening. Those involved may be adults and/or young people:

**The person displaying bullying behaviour** can be an individual or a group, often this may be some one who is popular, or has found they evoke a reaction by their behaviour; a group may be those most respected or thought to be part of a good team.

**The target of bullying behaviour** is the person or group on the receiving end of the bullying behaviour; often someone or those who are different from others, or stand out for a reason i.e. different culture, background, sexual orientation; someone with a disability, even a talented or less skilled individual.

**Backup and the Audience** are those that look on; they may take no part however they provide the audience and the reaction to the bullying behaviour; they may be afraid to speak up in case they become a target of the bullying behaviour.

**“Not my problem” group** or individuals who know it is happening, they don't get involved as they are not affected but don't do anything to stop the behaviour.

# HOW TO RECOGNISE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

People who behave in a bullying manner may be recognised by:

- > Being intentionally hostile, aggressive, this can seemingly be without reason
- > An imbalance of power between groups and/or individuals; where the one person/group exerts their power over another individual or group
- > Gaining satisfaction from their bullying behaviour
- > Causing harm to the target of bullying behaviour
- > Repeating the harmful behaviour, this can be directed towards either a person or a group

# IMPACT OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Bullying behaviour has an impact on everyone involved. For the person who is the target of bullying behaviour the effects can be felt psychologically and physiologically.

The person who is responsible for the bullying behaviour whilst often a popular person amongst

# HOW TO DEAL WITH BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

***There are generally two ways to deal with bullying behaviour:***

## **IMMEDIATELY AN ISSUE HAPPENS –**

This involves the person in charge being aware or told something is happening and seeking to resolve the issue at the time *And/or;*

## **AFTER AN ISSUE HAPPENS –**

This can be used if an immediate response does not resolve the issue straight away or the behaviour only becomes apparent later. If the bullying behaviour continues it may involve a disciplinary/complaints process.

## **IMMEDIATELY AN ISSUE HAPPENS (SEE FLOW CHART)**

### **WHERE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR INVOLVES YOUNG PEOPLE ONLY:**

The immediate way to deal with bullying behaviour involves the leader responsible at the time (e.g. coach) talking with all the people involved in bullying behaviour.

The leader should do this as soon as they become aware of the issue.

The leader will try to reach an agreement about what happened between those involved, highlighting the codes of conduct and the Club Anti-Bullying Commitment as reminders about acceptable behaviour in the club.

The leader may, if necessary, decide to impose immediate sanctions to deal with the bullying behaviour; both the parents and the Child Welfare Officer should also be informed of the issue and the way it was dealt with.

The club expects parents and all adults involved with the club to be supportive of the immediate resolution process, it is better for all people involved to sort issues immediately and quickly.

### **WHERE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR INVOLVES AN ADULT:**

The leader should approach the adult and ask to speak with the adult separately, away from any young people or other adults.

The leader should describe to the adult the type of behaviour witnessed or behaviour they have been made aware of and the effect it is having on others, especially young people.

The adult involved in the bullying behaviour should be reminded about the Club Anti-Bullying Commitment and the code of conduct and asked not to continue with the bullying behaviour. If the adult denies the

behaviour or the behaviour doesn't change the leader may need to issue immediate sanctions to protect young people or others.

The leader may also put a report into the complaints and disciplinary committee for further action if necessary.

The leader should also speak with the target of the bullying behaviour and let the young person know that this behaviour will stop and what will happen if it does not.

### **OUTCOME OF DEALING WITH THE ISSUE**

The Child Welfare Officer and the parents, if not already aware, should be informed of the issue and how it was dealt with. This encourages parents to support the policy of dealing with issues immediately and to the benefit of all involved.

It is important to check the bullying behaviour does not continue by observing the group, checking in with those involved and to encourage all club members to talk to a trusted person if they are worried about bullying behaviour.

## **AFTER AN ISSUE HAPPENS**

(SEE FLOW CHART)

Where bullying behaviour involves young people only:

If an issue has not been resolved, or it continues after an attempt to resolve the behaviour at the time, or bullying behaviour comes to light after the event the information should be passed on to the club Child Welfare Officer by the person who received the information about the behaviour.

In order to resolve the bullying behaviour between young people the Child Welfare Officer will need to know who is involved i.e. the person or group who have allegedly behaved in a bullying manner, the target of the behaviour and any others who may have been present at the time, i.e. the bystanders.

### **The Child Welfare Officer will assess the bullying behaviour based on:**

- > Information from target of the behaviour (individual or group)
- > How long the bullying behaviour has been going on
- > How often the bullying behaviour is happening
- > Is there an intention to cause harm to the target(s) of the bullying behaviour

### **Restorative approach**

The Child Welfare Officer/Club Officer/Other adult should use the No Blame approach to resolve the behaviour using the gathered information. The No Blame approach may help to restore or repair a previously positive relationship. This also allows the people involved to consider their feelings, their behaviour and the effects of bullying behaviour on everyone.

### **Use of sanctions**

If bullying behaviour is not resolved, the Child Welfare Officer/Club Officer/Other adult should inform the club secretary who can then pass the report to the club complaints and disciplinary committee to formally reach a resolution. The outcome of this process may impose sanctions on those involved. Sanctions can include time out from events, suspension or expulsion.

### **WHERE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR INVOLVES AN ADULT:**

Where an adult is involved in the bullying behaviour the matter may be dealt with through the informal complaints process – this will involve the report being passed to officers of the club. The Child Welfare Officer will talk with the young person and parent/guardian to find out what happened if bullying is between an adult and young person. If the bullying involves two adults, the Club Officer/Coach will talk to both parties involved to find out what happened.

When dealt with as an informal complaints process the Child Welfare Officer/Club Officer/Coach's role is to support the young person/adult. It is the responsibility of the Club Officers to follow the informal complaints process. The informal process is preferable to a formal procedure if this can resolve the behaviour of the adult.

### **USING THE NO BLAME APPROACH**

The NO BLAME approach seeks to find a resolution for the people involved in the bullying behaviour whilst maintaining their relationship within the club or the group. This is important for people who often simply want the behaviour to stop, without a need for punishments to be imposed. The NO BLAME approach encourages people to recognise the impact of their behaviour and then to take responsibility for changing it. By using this approach, a previous relationship between or within a team can often be re-established; this is often a preferred option for the people involved.

### **The ethos behind the NO BLAME approach is to:**

EXPLAIN the problem, i.e. that someone seems to be unhappy in the club, seems to be picked on etc. and explain how that person is feeling; this should not accuse anyone.

ASK for ideas as to how to help this person LEAVE the individual/group to put their ideas into practice MEET with the individuals involved to check how the behaviour has changed SHARE the responsibility of changing the behaviour and encouraging everyone to speak to an adult if there is bullying in the club.

**The NO BLAME approach does not attempt to get 'confessions', it seeks to get an acknowledgment of behaviour and provides an opportunity for people to change hurtful behaviour.**

There may be issues that are not resolved through the NO BLAME approach, where behaviour continues. Bullying behaviour is a breach of a code of conduct and may have to be dealt with through a disciplinary process. However the outcome for people is far better when issues can be resolved through the NO BLAME approach.



## **NO BLAME APPROACH**

### **STEP 1: MEET WITH PERSON WHO IS THE TARGET OF THE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying behaviour, first talk to the person who is the target of the behaviour. At this stage find out who was involved and what the person is feeling.

#### **Try asking the following questions:**

- > What was the behaviour that has caused upset?
- > Are you physically hurt and/or how are you feeling?
- > Who was involved in the behaviour, i.e. was it in your own peer group?
- > When and where did it happen?
- > Make sure you actively listen and advise the person of the next steps that will be taken

### **STEP 2: MEET WITH ALL INVOLVED**

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include those who initiated the bullying behaviour, some of the backup and if necessary you might want to ask the audience.

The meeting should be informal, and it is better to try to meet the individuals before meeting as a group. If you meet with a group keep the number controllable and you should only deal with the topic. Make sure everyone knows you are there to get their point of view and find their solutions.

### **STEP 3: EXPLAIN THE PROBLEM**

Talk about the hurt caused in general terms without apportioning blame, e.g. you might suggest the target of the bullying behaviour doesn't seem to be happy in the club, and you have heard they have been called names/left out/picked on etc. It might be helpful to ask questions like:

- > What do you think they are feeling?
- > How would you feel if it was you?
- > What would you do if it happened to you?
- > What could we do to see it does not happen again?

You should not use specific details of the incident or allocate blame, however explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, being rejected, laughed at that the person may be feeling.

Listen and watch out for reactions and pick up on comments without accusing or if in a group without isolating anyone; this is an opportunity to find out how others in the group feel about bullying behaviour.

### **STEP 4: ASK THE GROUP/INDIVIDUAL FOR THEIR IDEAS**

At this stage the group or individual is encouraged to suggest ways that would make a target of the bullying behaviour feel happier. Use phrases like: "if it were you what would help you ....", to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them, especially positive responses as these will help create an environment for the young people involved to work together.

### **STEP 5: LEAVE IT TO THE GROUP/INDIVIDUAL**

Now the problem has been identified and solutions suggested it is now handed over to the group/individual to act on. Arrange what actions they will take and to meet again a certain time frame. You have now passed the responsibility over to the group or the individual to take the suggested action within that time.

### **STEP 6: MEET THEM AGAIN**

Meet everyone, including the person who had been responsible for the bullying behaviour and the target of the behaviour; discuss how things are going and check if there have been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and keeps everyone involved in the process. At regular intervals after this reinforce the Club Anti-Bullying Commitment and the idea of the team or squad looking after each other and ensure it is known that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated. The parents of the young people involved should be informed of the actions taken.

### **STEP 7: SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY**

Meet with the wider group or team to discuss what should be in place to help prevent further incidents and what impact bullying behaviour may have on everyone, e.g. less free time or social activities, or other actions might need to be imposed as a preventative measure. Any action should be used in the spirit of prevention, not as a punishment.



# CLUB ANTI-BULLYING: RECORD SHEET

PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE TO NOTE AN ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF THE INCIDENT.

## GENERAL DETAILS:

Date and time of alleged incident:

Location:

Who reported it to you?

What is the bullying behaviour suspected (e.g. cyber, exclusion, extortion, gesture, physical, verbal)

Description of what happened:

## WHO IS INVOLVED \*

Person responsible for bullying behaviour:

Target of bullying behaviour:

Backup and audience:

## RECORD THE RESPONSES FROM THOSE INVOLVED?

Who spoke about it?

Feelings of individuals involved: (identify how the issue made them feel and any suggestions/fears expressed)

## WHAT ACTION DID YOU TAKE?

WHAT FOLLOW UP IS REQUIRED (identify who should follow up and when)

FURTHER ACTION TAKEN (note date and what follow up actions happened)

## FORM COMPLETED BY:

NAME: (ALL CAPS PLEASE)

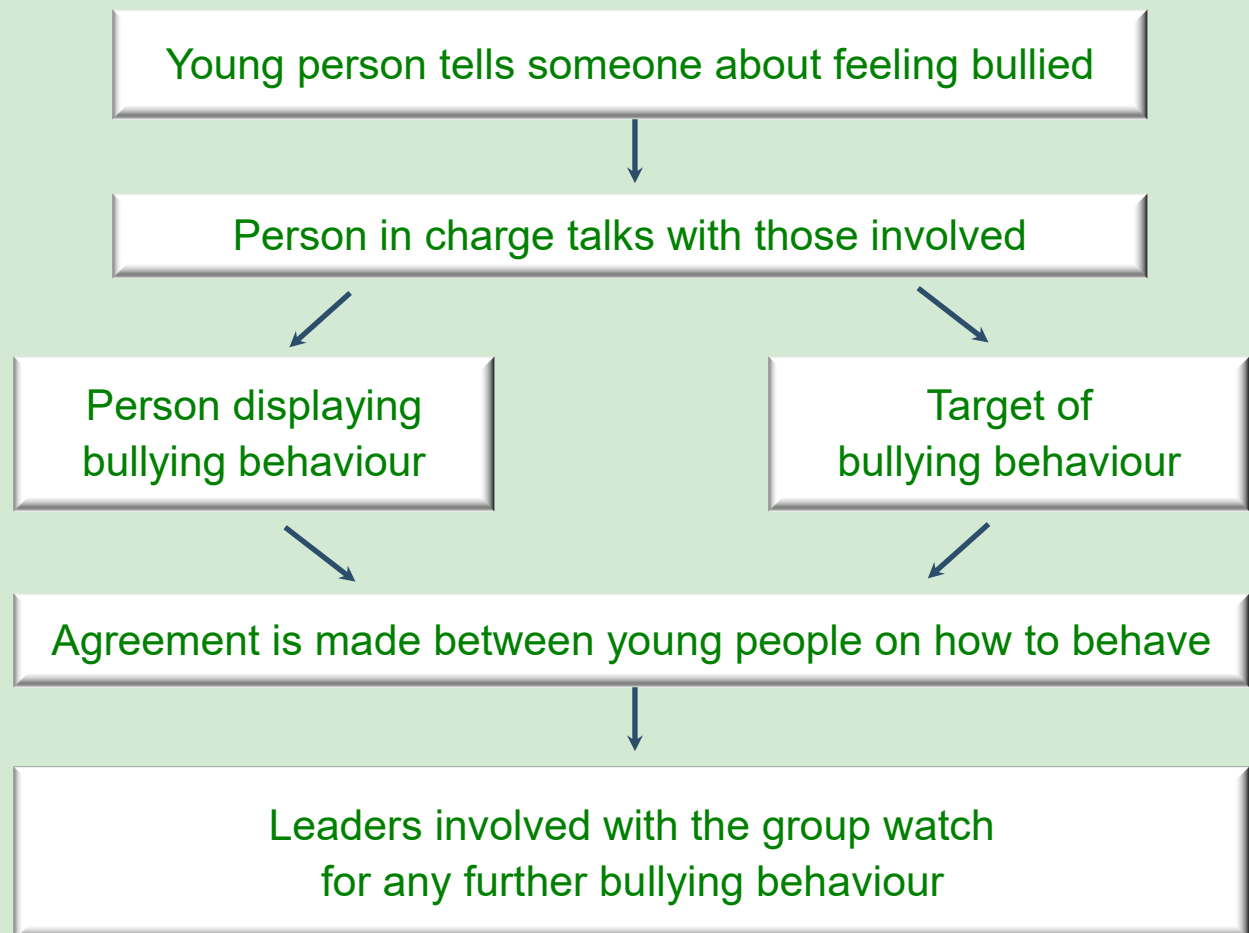
DATE:

POSITION:

SIGNATURE:

\*RECORD OF PEOPLE ALLEGED TO BE INVOLVED

## BULLYING BEHAVIOUR INVOLVING JUVENILES/CHILDREN: IMMEDIATE RESPONSE



- > The person in charge of the group should always try to stop bullying behaviour as quickly as possible; immediate sanctions may be used to control behaviour
- > If an adult is involved in the bullying behaviour this should be stopped immediately
- > Parents should always be told – this may happen after the behaviour has been sorted out
- > Club Child Welfare Officer should be told; the Child Welfare Officer should not need to do anything unless bullying behaviour continues
- > Reaching a solution straight away is usually better for all young people involved
- > All those working with the young people should encourage the group to follow the codes of conduct
- > Only those involved, their parents and the Child Welfare Officer/Club Officer need to be told about what has happened; they will note the behaviour, the actions and the outcome –this record will remain with the Committee

**BULLYING BEHAVIOUR:  
RESPONSE AFTER AN ISSUE HAPPENS**

Club member tells someone about feeling bullied or bullying behaviour hasn't stopped

Person in charge of the group asks the Child Welfare or other Club Officer to help

Child Welfare/Club Officer speaks with all people involved and informs parents

Person displaying bullying behaviour

Audience

Target of bullying behaviour

Child Welfare/Club Officer uses No Blame approach to resolve behaviour between people

If not resolved the information can be passed to a Complaints & Disciplinary Committee (CDC) who contact those involved

Person displaying bullying behaviour

Audience

Target of bullying behaviour

Outcome reached and sent out by CDC based on information given by those involved (usually a hearing)

Outcome put in place to resolve behaviour

People involved with group watch for any further bullying behaviour

IF THE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR IS NOT RESOLVED IMMEDIATELY,  
IT CONTINUES TO HAPPEN OR ONLY BECOMES APPARENT AFTER THE EVENT,  
THIS PROCESS CAN BE FOLLOWED FOR REACHING A RESOLUTION:

- > Adults/relevant persons in charge should respond to bullying behaviour without delay
- > The response should involve all young People/adults affected by the bullying behaviour
- > Parents should be told what is happening where bullying involves a juvenile
- > The Child Welfare Officer, parents and young people will all be involved in putting a resolution in place
- > In the case of adults, all relevant parties will be involved in putting a resolution in place

## **BULLYING BEHAVIOUR:**

### **RESPONSE AFTER AN ISSUE HAPPENS**

- > Dealing with bullying behaviour after it has happened often has a greater impact on people involved – support will be needed for all those involved
- > Keep the information to only those involved
- > The Child Welfare Officer or other relevant person will note the behaviour, the actions decided by the group and outcome – this record remains with the Child Welfare Officer and Complaints and Disciplinary Committee

**Adapted from:**

**Swim Ireland, Safeguarding Children Policies and Procedures, 2014**