

AFC Oldham (2005) **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Statement of Intent

AFC Oldham (2005) are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members, players and volunteers so they can participate in sports in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our organisation. If bullying does occur, all members should be reassured that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING organisation. This means that anyone who knows bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer or any other Executive Committee Member.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the 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 (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text message and tormenting, (e.g. hiding sports kit, making threatening gestures).
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti or gestures.
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic - because of or focusing 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.
- Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.
- This organisation has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of the Policy

- All organisation members, coaches, officials, parents and volunteers should understand what bullying is.
- All organisation members, coaches, officials and volunteers should know what the organisation 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 and bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Indicators

An individual may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Club officials should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if an individual:

- says he or she is being bullied.
- is unwilling to attend sessions.
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacks confidence.
- feels ill before sessions.
- has possessions go "missing".
- asks for money or starts stealing (to pay a bully).
- has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- is frightened to say what is wrong.

In More Extreme Cases:

- starts stammering.
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- is bullying or aggressive to others
- stops eating.
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.

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

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer or a member of the Executive Committee or contact the relevant County Welfare Officer.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to a County Welfare Officer for advice.
3. Relevant Individuals should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the organisation will initiate disciplinary action under the organisation constitution.

Recommended Action

If the organisation decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow the procedure outlined below:

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/not appropriate a small panel (made up from Club Welfare Officer and two other Club Members) should meet with the individual alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same 3 persons should meet with the alleged bully and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has in their view take place, the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
5. The club should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
6. All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

In the Case of Adults Reported to be Bullying Anyone Within the Organisation Under 18:

1. The County Welfare Officer should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate.
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made. The FA's Safeguarding Children Education Programme may be recommended.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Services.

Prevention

1. The organisation will have a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part.
2. All members must sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club.
3. The Club Welfare Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

This policy is based on guidance provided to schools by KIDSCAPE. KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying. KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300 or you can access their website via www.kidscape.org.uk.

You may also wish to access any of the following website designed to give advice and guidance to parents and children who are faced with dealing with bullying:

- www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- www.stoptextbully.com
- www.bullying.co.uk