



Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy

Policy Statement

The Club is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for everyone so they can participate and enjoy the sport in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. It is the policy of the Club not to tolerate bullying and harassment in any form. It is the right of everyone to participate in the sport without fear of harassment or bullying. If bullying of any kind does occur everyone should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

What is Bullying and Harassment?

Harassment causes distress and anxiety. It is uninvited, may be personally offensive and is always unwelcome; it can be detrimental to all aspects of people's lives. Bullying can be defined as being offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour; abuse or misuse of power or unfair sanctions.

Bullying and Harassment Can Be:

- **Emotional:** being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful messages, or tormenting.
- **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.
- **Cyber:** All areas of the internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse, and mobile threats by text messaging and calls.

What to do if you are being bullied

- Talk to someone you can trust, a parent, coach, friend or relative
- Be persistent. If the first person you talk to ignores you don't give up, speak to someone else

- If you can, write down everything the bullies have done or said to you, and try to write how you feel. Witnesses are important, if you have been bullied or harassed in front of other people get their names. When you have found someone you can trust and who is helpful, discuss what you have written with this person.

What not to do:

- Don't try to deal with the problem on your own – there is nothing wrong in asking for help.
- Don't hit the bullies – you might end up being accused of bullying yourself
- Don't believe the lies that the bullies tell you
- Don't hide what is happening from the people you trust. Keeping things secret is the bullies biggest weapon against you

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying and Harassment?

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

Objectives of this Policy

- All participants, coaches, volunteers and parents/guardians/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All participants, coaches, volunteers and parents/guardians/carers should know what the Club's policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- The Club takes bullying and harassment very seriously. Everyone should be assured that they will be supported when bullying or harassment is reported.
- Bullying and Harassment will not be tolerated.
- All participants, coaches, volunteers and parents/guardians/carers should have an appreciation of the signs and indicators of bullying and harassment.

What to Look Out For

A person may show signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied or harassed. Everyone should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a person:

- Says he or she is being bullied or harassed
- Is unwilling to go to their sport/activity sessions
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence

- Feels ill before their sport/activity session
- Becomes distressed and anxious, even stops eating
- Has clothes torn or equipment damaged after their sport/activity session
- Has possessions that go 'missing'
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Seem more aggressive and unreasonable than normal
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

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

Procedures for Dealing with Bullying and Harassment

1. Report bullying incidents to the Designated Child Protection Officer, Debbie Downer, or the Club Secretary Nick Cox.
2. The Designated Child Protection Officer will then report the incident to the appropriate body dependant upon where the incident has taken place. For example, if the incident has taken place on the Club's premises the Club Committee will be informed.
3. The following are steps that the Club Committee may take:
 - Inform Parents/Guardians/Carers who may be asked to come in for a meeting to discuss the problem.
 - Investigate the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying and stop the bullying quickly.
 - Attempt to help the bullies to change their behaviour.
 - If this fails and the bullying continues, the Club will initiate an investigation and possible disciplinary action.

- All coaches involved with the individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcomes of the process.
- If necessary and appropriate, the Police will be consulted.

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

The NFAS Child Protection Officer should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate. This may include initiating an investigation and possible disciplinary action and in more serious cases lead to the Police and/or Social Services being contacted. The Police are able to deal with the escalation of bullying incidents under the 'Protection From Harassment Act 1997'. When two or more incidents amount to a course of conduct which causes someone alarm and distress, then the Police can either consider a formal warning or prosecution. On conviction for Harassment the Court can impose a restraining order for future protection of victims.

Prevention

The Club has a written constitution which requires compliance with this policy and acceptable and proper behaviour by all members with a right of sanction in default.

The Club will publicise and regularly review its approach to bullying and harassment.