



Disability Sport NI

Anti Bullying Policy

Date of Approval

Approved by Board 25.06.2024

This Anti-Bullying Policy applies to all staff and members – athletes, young people, parents, coaches, officials, volunteers, and others who help and assist with Disability Sport NI.

Note: The terms 'child' and 'young person' describe any person under the age of 18. References to 'parents' should be read as parents, guardians, and carers inclusively.

What is Bullying Behaviour?

Bullying behaviour is defined by the Department of Education and Skills guidelines as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

- All forms of bullying will be addressed.
- Everybody has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying.

Bullying behaviour can include:

- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc...
- Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation, or the continual ignoring of individuals.
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour.
- Exclusion from activities Intentionally isolating another person from conversation or during activity.
- Taking or damaging property or belongings.
- Posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social network sites.
- Threatening or abusive messaging (text, social media, email).
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sectarianism, sexual comments, suggestions or behaviour.
- Unwanted physical contact. Children with a disability, from ethnic minorities, young people who are gay or lesbian, or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to this form of abuse and are more likely to be targeted.

Bullying behaviour can occur between:

- Child to child - physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, damage to property and isolation.
- Adult to adult - physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, financial exploitation, damage to property and isolation.
- Adult to child - includes the repeated use of gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature or any comment intended to degrade the child.
- Child to adult -includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of threatening or intimidatory nature by an individual child or group of children.

The club or organisation will:

- recognise its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all participants from harm
- promote and implement this anti-bullying policy in addition to our safeguarding policy and procedures
- seek to ensure that bullying behaviour is not accepted or condoned
- require all members of the club/organisation to be given information about, and sign up to, this policy
- take action to investigate and respond to any alleged incidents of bullying
- encourage and facilitate all athletes to play an active part in developing and adopting a code of conduct to address bullying
- ensure that coaches are given access to information, guidance and/or training on bullying.

Each participant, coach, volunteer, or official will:

- respect every athlete's need for, and rights to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition, and opportunity for taking responsibility are available
- respect the feelings and views of others
- recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special and should be valued
- show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress
- be committed to the early identification of bullying, and prompt and collective action to deal with it
- ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see
- report incidents of bullying they see – by doing nothing you are condoning bullying.

Support to the athletes:

- athletes should know who will listen to and support them
- systems should be established to open the door to children wishing to talk about bullying or any other issue that affects them
- potential barriers to talking (including those associated with an athlete's disability or impairment) need to be identified and addressed at the outset to enable children to approach adults for help
- athletes should have access to Helpline numbers
- anyone who reports an incident of bullying behaviour will be listened to carefully and be supported
- any reported incident of bullying behaviour will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved
- athlete's being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development
- those who bully will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying

- sanctions for those bullying others that involve long periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, will be avoided.

Support to the parents/guardians:

- parents/guardians should be advised on the club/organisation's bullying policy and practice
- any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent(s)/ athlete's guardians
- parents/guardians will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and bully) and agreements made as to what action should be taken
- information and advice on coping with bullying behaviour will be made available
- support should be offered to the parent(s) including information on other agencies or support lines.

Useful contacts

- NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000
- ChildLine 0800 11 11 / www.childline.org.uk
- Kidscape www.kidscape.org.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance www.antibullyingalliance.org

Further information

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) Information and resources related to this topic are available at: <https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/anti-bullying/> OR, <https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/tools/anti-bullying-activities-for-sport/>