



Naomh Seosamh Lann Abhaigh Contae Aontroma C.L.G.



Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying behaviour can be defined as repeated aggression. It can be verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion by one or more children against a victim. Bullying contains seven key features:

1. An intention to be hurtful.
2. The intention is carried out.
3. The behaviour harms the target.
4. The bully overwhelms the target with his or her power.
5. There is often no justification for the action.
6. The behaviour repeats itself again and again.
7. The bully derives a sense of satisfaction from hurting the target.

Many young people are reluctant to tell adults that they are being bullied. Older youths or children are even more reluctant. A constant need for vigilance and encouragement will be underlined in the Club to report bullying. Forms of Bullying:

- Direct bullying - where the behaviour is obvious and bystanders are aware of it e.g. physical or verbal.
- Indirect bullying - where the behaviour is more difficult to recognize e.g. intimidation or isolation.
- Verbal bullying - including slandering, ridiculing, slagging, abusive telephone calls, name calling etc.
- Physical bullying - including pushing, shoving, assaults, damage to person's property.
- Gesture bullying - includes non-verbal gestures/glances which convey threatening or frightening messages/intent.
- E-bullying/cyber bullying - using web pages, emails, texts to abuse, intimidate and attack others. Either directly or indirectly.
- Relational bullying - behaviour which sets out to deliberately damage another person's friendship or feelings of inclusion in a friendship group e.g. exclusion, isolation etc.
- Extortion - the deliberate extortion of money or other items of property accompanied by threats.
- Homophobic bullying - bullying that is typically aimed at young people who are gay or who are perceived to be gay. It will include name-calling, isolation and violence.
- Racial bullying - can be expressed physically, socially, or psychologically when one is labelled negatively as being different from others according to one's race.
- Mobbing - This means that the target is being bullied by a group of perpetrators and not just one perpetrator.

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All types and forms of bullying are unacceptable. It is important to be aware, that bullying of a child may be carried out by other children (young and old) either individually or as part of a group or by an adult/adults. Bullying is a matter for the whole Club. This means that everyone in the Club have a part

It is the responsibility of the Club, whether through the Children's Officer(s), Mentors or other Club Officers to deal with any instances of bullying. "Children have the right to protection from all forms of violence (physical and mental). They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them" (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 19) Responsibility within the Anti-Bullying Policy: It is the responsibility of all members of St. Joseph's GAC to help develop a caring and supportive atmosphere where any form of bullying is unacceptable. Everybody has to work together to stop bullying, the child, the parent, the Mentor, the officials of the Club. Bullying can be distinguished from bossiness and boisterous play. A bossy child will boss whoever is around. So often it is due to lack of self-control or skills of negotiation or compromise. Boisterous play can be dangerous but it does not involve young people wilfully setting out to hurt or victimise. Young people often grow out of this kind of behaviour as they grow older. What distinguishes bullying from bossiness or boisterousness is that the bully always picks on someone less powerful and more vulnerable. Persistent "slagging" which has the same devastating effects as bullying, shouldn't be ignored. All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying therefore can only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so. The following indicators are warning signs that a young player might be a victim of bullying.

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities.
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings, physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, etc).
- Stress-caused illness – headaches and stomach aches which seem unexplained.
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations.
- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven).
- Having few friends.
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed).
- Not eating.
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide.
- Anxiety.

Bullying behaviour can be prevented by:

- Ensure that all Club members follow the Code of Behaviour, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.
- Deal with any incidents as they arise.
- Use "no blame approach" working with bullies and the group of young people helping them to understand the hurt they are causing and so make the problem a "shared concern" of the group.

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- Reinforce that there is a “permission to tell” concept in the Club and that is it okay to tell.
- Encourage our young players to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly different or new people.
- Offer victim immediate support and put the “no blame approach” into operation.
- Never tell a young player to ignore bullying, they can’t ignore it, it hurts too much.
- Never encourage a young player to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game.

Dealing with Bullying: When dealing with a case of bullying the following steps should be followed:
Step 1 – Interview the victim: If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim and find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation? (e.g., jokes, name calling, teasing, sarcasm, offensive language, offensive songs, or physical contact, hitting, spitting, shoving).
- How it hurt the victim.
- Was it within his/her own peer group?
- Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation.
- Actively listen.

Step 2 - Meet all involved: Arrange to meet all those involved. This should include bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable.
- Make a point of calling “a special meeting”.
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all.
- Speak of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim.
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?

Step 3 - Explain the problem: The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of blame should not be discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, being feeling left out, rejected or laughed at. Try asking questions:

- Would they like it if it happened to them?
- If someone here in the group was bullied by someone else within the group, what could we do to ensure it does not happen again?”
- Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone.

Step 4 - Share the Responsibility: Explain what steps/controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result.



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Step 5 - Ask the group for their ideas: At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases “if it were you” to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them.

Step 6 - Leave it to them: Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week’s time. Pass the responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done.

Step 7 - Meet with them again: Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process. Again enforce the idea of the “team” looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying and intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.