

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Burnley Football Club & Burnley FC in the Community

Date	Version	Name	Next Review Date
Oct 2023	1.0	Gary Russell	June 2024
June 2024	1.1	Gary Russell	July 2026

FOREWORD AND POLICY INTRODUCTION

Burnley Football Club and Burnley Football Club in the Community are committed to ensuring the wellbeing and safety of children, young people and adults and believe that it is unacceptable for anyone to experience abuse of any kind.

All children, young people and adults have the right to protection from all forms of abuse and exploitation. It is the duty of all staff and volunteers, paid or unpaid at the Club or Community Organisation to safeguard these groups by creating an environment that protects them from harm. This policy extends to all players, participants and staff of the Club and Community Organisation.

The wellbeing of children, young people and adults is paramount for all staff and accordingly, they must make themselves aware of this Bullying Policy. Where appropriate, the policy will be supplemented by in-service training and additional guidance. All suspicions, complaints or observations of bullying will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

DEFINITIONS

A **child** is defined by UK laws and United Nations as someone under the age of 18 years.

An **‘adult at risk’** is defined as someone who is over the age of 18 and who may have needs for care and support, is experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect, and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of or the experience of abuse and or neglect.

Activity/session covers any matches, events, coaching or community activities for which BFC or BFCitC has responsibility for the care of attendees.

Attendees refers to anyone who attends an activity as either a participant or player at a match or activity, academy or community event.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AIMS:

Bullying can have devastating effects on individuals if left unaddressed. It can be a barrier to learning, having fun, developing social interactions and at worst can have serious impact on an individual’s mental health.

BFC and BFCitC have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and any reported incidents of bullying will be taken seriously. We have a clear set of values, and our participants, parents and players are all made aware of our code of conduct during inductions to sessions.

Bullying has no place within the Club and to combat any forms of Bullying we aim to:

- Respond swiftly and quickly to minimise the impact on all individuals
- Provide workshops and briefings for all of our players and participants on how to maintain positive attitudes, develop their knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity, empathy and the impact bullying can have on someone

- Develop a range of strategies for people to protect themselves from being bullied should people feel they can act in this manner towards others.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand that Bullying is not acceptable, and that support is available should this behaviour be taking place.
- Record all incidents of bullying and will ensure that any identified patterns or trends emerging are addressed firmly but sensitively
- Share information about concerns with the Board/Trustees to have senior management oversight of concerns within the Club.

If anyone feels that they are being bullied, they must talk to someone.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff should ensure that they have read and understand this policy. The Head of Safeguarding will advise on and manage all cases of bullying with the Safeguarding Team to ensure that all incidents of bullying are taken seriously and responded to consistently, appropriately and in a timely manner.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Burnley FC recognise Bullying as per the NSPCC definition, which defines it as.

“Behaviour that hurts someone else, it includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening, or undermining someone. It is usually a repeated behaviour carried out over a period of time by either an individual or a group and can hurt someone either physically or emotionally”.

Therefore, bullying can take different forms, including:

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| • physical bullying, such as hitting, slapping, or pushing someone | • exclusion, such as ignoring or isolating someone |
| • verbal bullying, such as name calling, gossiping, or threatening someone | • undermining, by constant criticism or spreading rumours |
| • non-verbal abuse, such as hand signs or text messages | • controlling or manipulating someone |
| • emotional abuse, such as threatening, intimidating or humiliating someone | • making silent, hoax or abusive calls |
| | • racial, sexual or homophobic bullying |
| | • bullying someone because they have a disability. |

Bullying tends to be hidden and subtle, but can be overt and intimidating, some bullies manipulate others to carry out the behaviours, however we consider that it is bullying when careless or reckless behaviour unintentionally causes the same effects as those carried out intentionally.

WHAT IS CYBER BULLYING?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying in the real world, online bullying can follow the individual wherever they go, via social networks, gaming, mobile phone or any other form of online device. Cyber-bullying is a form of bullying that can happen at any time, any place and with a potentially bigger audience. More people can be involved with more scope for the perpetrator to remain anonymous.

The perpetrator in these cases often feels distanced and protected from the incident. Bystanders can find themselves drawn into the behaviour by sharing, liking or forwarding the information to others, which then makes the bullying much more widespread.

Forms of Cyber Bullying may present as:

- Threats and intimidation via electronic means
- Harassment or 'cyberstalking'
- Sexting
- Vilification/defamation
- Setting up website pages to invite others to post derogatory comment about a pupil
- The sending of insulting and vicious text messages
- Exclusion or peer rejection
- Impersonation
- Unauthorised publication of private information or images (including 'happy slapping')
- The posting of fake and/or obscene photographs of the victim on a social networking site
- Hacking into social networking sites and removing and circulating material which may embarrassing or personal
- Manipulation
- "Chatting" online e.g. through Social Network/Gaming Sites etc

OTHER TYPES OF BULLYING RACISM

Examples of racism that we are mindful of:

- Verbal abuse by name calling racist jokes and offensive mimicry
- Cultural appropriation
- Physical threats or attacks
- Wearing of provocative badges or insignia
- Bringing racist leaflets, comics, or magazines into the environment
- Inciting others to behave in a racist way
- Racist graffiti or other written insults, even against food, music, dress, or customs

SEXUAL BULLYING OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- Sexual innuendoes and propositions
- Abusive name-calling
- Looks and comments about physical appearance, attractiveness (e.g. emerging puberty)
- Sharing of pornographic material or graffiti with sexual content
- Sexualised communication via email, text or over the phone
- Unwanted or unsolicited sexual advances

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Bullying around sexual orientation looks like other sorts of bullying, but it is specifically because of their sexual orientation. Bullying someone based on their sexual orientation can be, in some circumstances, be classed as a criminal offence and as such carries a much higher level of seriousness.

- Verbal abuse - including spreading rumours that someone is gay, using disparaging language to insult someone. 'You dress gay'
- Physical abuse – including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault, and threatening behaviour.
- Cyberbullying – using on-line spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them.
- Can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY

We should be alert to the fact that players, participants or staff with special educational needs or disabilities are often at greater risk of being bullied than other individuals based on their educational difficulties or disability.

BANTER

It should be noted that abusive comments and interactions should not be passed off as 'banter'. Such comments referring to, but not limited too, a person's race, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, culture, or special educational needs are not acceptable and will be treated as bullying.

PEER ON PEER ABUSE

Peer on peer abuse can take many forms including bullying (including cyberbullying), close relationship abuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, serious youth violence, financial abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and/or gender-based violence and is often motivated by prejudice.

These types of abuse rarely take place in isolation and often indicate wider safeguarding concerns.

The safeguarding principles, and the Club's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their participants remain the same regardless of where the incident took place and regardless of whether the incident was online or not. If staff, players or participants become aware of any of the above they should speak with the Safeguarding Team immediately.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO RESPOND

All players and participants at the Club have the right to enjoy sessions and activities free of bullying and harassment. Anyone who feels bullied or intimidated should expect we listen to and act promptly and sensitively.

Where staff are working within a school, they should make themselves familiar with the schools anti bullying policy and the process they are expected to follow. All child or adult at risk related incidents should always be reported through to the school Safeguarding Team to follow up. Should you not be satisfied as to the way the matter is dealt with then this should be shared with the Club Safeguarding team to investigate and follow up accordingly.

All staff have a duty to address problematic or bullying behaviours as they occur, the safeguarding team, including safeguarding champions are there to support.

Low level disruption and the use of offensive language can have a significant impact on who it is targeted at. If left unchallenged or dismissed as 'banter' it could lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and will help to stop negative behaviours escalating.

It is important to recognise that there is culpability if you see or are aware of bullying but do nothing about it. Neglecting to act makes the bystander complicit in the bullying. If you are aware of bullying happening it should immediately be reported to a member of staff. If you are witness to a bullying incident you must do what you can to show your disapproval of the bullying, providing it is safe to do so and within your ability to do so. Bullying will not be stopped if it is kept secret. We guarantee that whistle blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be supported. More information can be found in the Whistle Blowing Policy.

SIGNS AND INDICATORS

Signs of bullying can be detected in many ways, changes in behaviour such as the following should be identified as a cause for concern:

- Unwillingness to attend training, work, or programme session.
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet.
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that has been copied or interfered with.
- Bags, football boots and other belongings suddenly go missing or are damaged
- Change to established habits (giving up things they enjoy, or significant changes to friendship groups)
- Low levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the medical unit with symptoms such as headaches or stomach pains
- Unexplained cuts or bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival
- Choosing the company of adults all of the time rather than peers
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping and/or experiencing nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

PREVENTION

Our staff will always demonstrate excellent role modelling to ensure that standards are set from those overseeing sessions, our staff will not participate in any type of communication or activity that may cause harm to someone and will actively challenge and behaviours they are aware of which they may cause harm.

The preferred way to deal with Bullying would be to prevent it in the first place, to do this we will provide all players/ participants with a Code of Conduct as part of their induction and staff will receive training to understand how to manage a one-off behaviour incident to prevent them becoming a pattern, this may include talking to individuals or groups about the issues of difference or education workshops. If the 'one off' incident is deemed to be serious it will be recorded on MyConcern to ensure behaviours are recorded to demonstrate the ongoing nature should this be necessary.

This culture extends to all areas of our business, including but not limited to changing rooms, transport, activities, canteens, trips, tours, and tournaments and beyond the training sites including any away matches.

Players, participants, and staff must understand that initiation ceremonies designed to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation are not acceptable.

We encourage parents, participants, players and carers to speak with us about any concerns they may have and will inform them at the start of each session/season of the procedures to follow if they are worried about their child.

WHAT TO DO IF AN INCIDENT OF BULLYING IS REPORTED/NOTICED?

If an incident occurs, staff and participants must be made aware immediately that we do not tolerate Bullying, the person making the remarks should be told the impact of bullying and they should then be made aware that should the behaviour continue they will be asked to leave the session and possibly face further outcomes.

At the end of the session/activity the participant's details, both victim and the child making the remarks and any other witnesses should be gathered, and they should be made aware that the Safeguarding Team will be contacting them to discuss the matter further.

If, despite during the session and the discussion with the child making the remarks the bullying continues the safeguarding team should be contacted immediately to offer guidance to staff dealing with the behaviour. Consideration should be given to removed them from the session immediately.

The member of staff dealing with the incident should make a report on MyConcern and the safeguarding team will then take over the investigation and feedback to staff once this is completed.

There is no need for staff to investigate the matter further unless asked for more information by the Safeguarding team.

WHAT THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM WILL DO?

On receipt of the information the safeguarding team will undertake the following:

- The victim should be interviewed with a parent and supported to write an account of events
- The alleged perpetrator, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed with their parents and supported to write an account of events
- All interview details will be recorded on MyConcern
- The safeguarding team will meet to discuss possible disciplinary actions or training needs. (this should consider the need for support for both parties)
- If appropriate a disciplinary sanction will be given as set out in the Player/ Participant Code of Conduct for example, suspension. In particularly serious and/or persistent cases, the perpetrator could expect permanent exclusion.
- The alleged perpetrator will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the safeguarding or human resource team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why their behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. They will be offered guidance on modifying their behaviour.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the safeguarding team, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to them why revenge or repercussions are inappropriate and would be considered as 'victimisation'. They will be offered support to develop a strategy to help them.
- A monitoring and review plan should be put in place.

We will apply disciplinary measures fairly, consistently, and reasonably to ensure that our participants and players understand that the behaviour is wrong and unacceptable at, and within, any part of Burnley Football Club.

We will consider and explore the motivations for the behaviour and whether safeguards need to be put in place to protect the perpetrator should reprisals take place.

In very serious cases, and only after the Head of Safeguarding has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to Children's Services. In line with KCSIE 2022 a report should be made and should be considered as a safeguarding concern where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

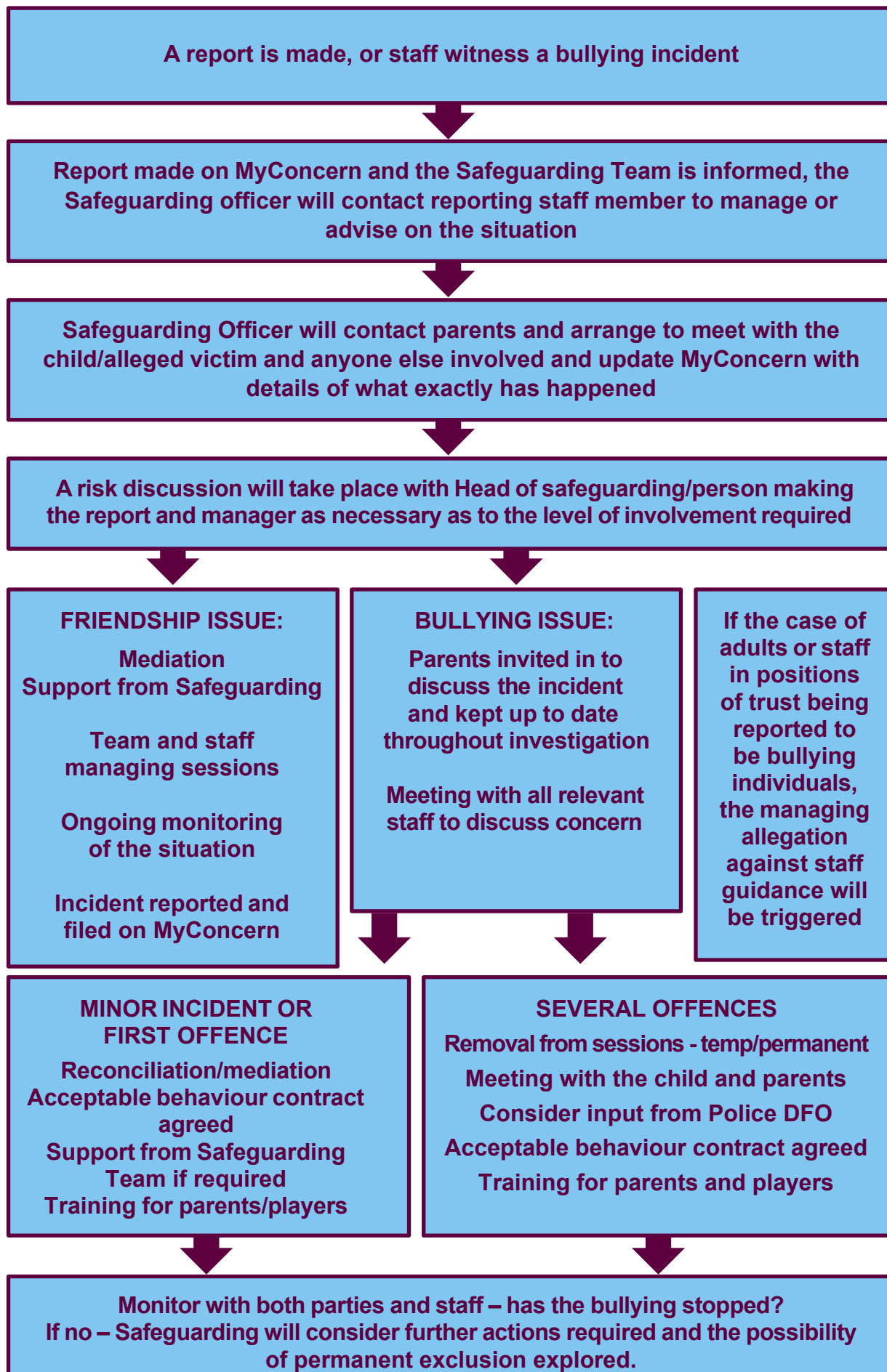
In line with KCSIE 2022 all peer-on-peer abuse will also be treated as a safeguarding matter. It is the policy of the Club to attempt to resolve such issues internally under our own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely. If this is the case, then the Clubs Safeguarding Policy should be referred to for guidance with regards to making a referral to Children's Services. We may exclude a player, participant, or member of staff either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and if the support put in place for the perpetrator does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.

WHAT TO DO IF AN ALLEGATION IS MADE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF FOR BULLYING A CHILD, YOUNG PERSON OR ADULT AT RISK?

If an allegation is made or someone has a concern about the behaviour of a member of staff, The Head of Safeguarding must be informed immediately this will trigger the management of allegations against staff policy.

As part of this policy a report will be made to Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as is required under statutory legislation.

More information about this process can be found in the Managing allegations against staff policy.



CONTACTS

Gary Russell

Head of Safeguarding
g.russell@burnleyfc.com
07435 946205

Sharon Swindells

Safeguarding Manager, BFCitC
s.swindells@burnleyfc.com
07809 902145

Mel Howarth, Academy

Safeguarding Officer
Melanie.howarth@burnleyfc.com
07551428377

Additional information and support can be found here:

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

www.bullying.co.uk

[Childnet - Childnet](#)

[UK Council for Internet Safety - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[LGBTQ young people | Barnardo's](#)

[MindEd Hub](#)

[Educate Against Hate - Prevent Radicalisation & Extremism](#)

[Show Racism the Red Card](#)

[Kick It Out](#)

GUIDANCE INFORMATION

Guidance for Staff

Watch for early signs of distress in children and young people – deterioration of work, sudden change in attitude, spurious illness, isolation, the desire to remain with adults, often being late, low self-esteem, bruises and cuts, avoidance of attendance. All of the above may be symptomatic of other problems but may be early signs of bullying.

Be available and willing to listen. Treat the information seriously.

- Record incidents of bullying precisely.
- Offer the victim immediate support and help by putting this procedure into operation.
- Involve the Safeguarding Team who will liaise with the parents/carers of both the victim and the child who is doing the bullying where appropriate.
- Avoid the "bullying" model when applying sanctions. Do not bully the child who is bullying. Try to negotiate an agreed form of atonement.
- Ensure that supervision is consistent especially in changing rooms, waiting areas etc
- All observed incidents of bullying must be stopped immediately. They must then be dealt with, either immediately or at a later more appropriate time.
- Help the child who is bullying to become aware that his/her actions are bullying and that these are hurtful to the victim. Ascertain wherever possible the reasons why she/he bullies others.
- Bullying is always wrong – a victim of bullying must not be made to feel guilty because she/he is bullied.
- If bullying is happening out of sessions, inform the parents/carers of this.
- Help children think about strategies to use if they are being bullied, a more proactive approach.
- Ensure that children know what to do when they are bullied.
- Tell the children from day one that bullying is not tolerated at this Club. Everyone is expected to ensure that it does not happen and has the responsibility to tell – this is not telling tales.
- Cyberbullying – be prepared that we may need to arrange and oversee the removal of inappropriate content (parents/carers to be made aware). Providers and/or the police may need to assist with this.

GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND ADULTS

What to do if you think you are being bullied:

- Tell your parent/carer/friend, tell the Safeguarding Team, a coach or any other adult in the Club you trust
- Tell them again if the bullying does not stop or if it continues outside
- Hang around with good friends and let them know what has been happening
- Report instances of cyberbullying which you see or hear about
- Do not retaliate or respond to upsetting texts
- Keep hurtful texts and other messages
- Copy and paste hurtful messages received via social networking sites to show it happened.
- Block individuals who upset you
- Ensure social networking sites are only accessible to invited friends
- Tell someone in the Club if you know that someone else is being bullied
- Try not to show you are upset, which although difficult, will help discourage the bully
- Try to appear confident
- Just walk past if people call you unpleasant names – tell someone when you can
- If you feel threatened walk away - tell someone as soon as you feel safe to do so
- Tell yourself you don't deserve to be bullied

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/CARERS

What to do if you think a child, young person or adult at risk is being bullied:

- Watch for signs – not wanting to go to activities/training, minor illnesses, headaches, other pointers, avoiding friends, coming home with bruises or torn clothing, possessions disappearing, becoming upset after using the internet or mobile phone.
- Listen to what they say, try to establish that the problem really is bullying and not something else.
- Discuss with them what you can do.
- Contact the Safeguarding Team. Do this for as long as the bullying continues.
- Help them try to deal with the problem by him or herself. Never advise them to retaliate.
- Try not to be over-anxious or over-protective. It may sometimes be helpful to talk with the bully's parents/carers, but before you do this, take advice from the Safeguarding Team.
- Do not encourage retaliation. This rarely helps and may only make things worse.
- Other participants/players may sometimes make names up for others, usually these names are used in a humorous way and are not meant to cause offence. If, however, someone is upset about some of the names used, then let the Club know about this.
- Reassure them if problems occur.
- Learn about communication technology and familiarise yourself with safe practice.

