

# Durham County FA

## Anti-Bullying Policy



### Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in football in a relaxed, safe and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all members/participants should be able to know who to report the matter to and be confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to report the matter to the Activity/Event Organiser.

### What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggressive, intimidating, malicious and unwanted aggressive behaviour with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be the following (this is not an exhaustive list):

**Emotional** being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)

**Physical** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence

**Sexual** unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

**Discrimination** racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, homophobic comments, jokes about disabled people, sexist comments,

**Verbal** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

### Cyberbullying

This is when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger, tweets), to deliberately upset someone. Bullies often feel anonymous and 'distanced' from the incident when it takes place online and 'bystanders' can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding the information on. There is a growing trend for bullying to occur online or via texts – bullies no longer rely on being physically near to the young person. The County FA commits to ensure our website websites and/ or social networking pages are being used appropriately and any online bullying will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with procedures detailed in this policy.

### Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying is unwanted and 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. The County FA has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### Objectives of this Policy

- All members, participants and staff should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All members, participants and staff should know what the County FA policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All members, participants and staff should know what the County FA policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a County FA we take bullying seriously. Members and participants should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

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### Signs and Indicators

Someone may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child or young person:

- says he or she is being bullied
- is unwilling to go to events or sessions
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- feels ill before events or sessions
- comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged
- has possessions 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
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

In more extreme cases:

- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other people
- 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.

### **Bullying as a result of any form of discrimination**

Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability.

Generally, these forms of bullying look like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include:

- **Verbal abuse** – derogatory remarks about a gender, suggesting a gender is more inferior to another, or that black, Asian and ethnic minority people are not as capable as white people; spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that something or someone is inferior and so they are “gay” – for example, “you’re such a gay boy!” or “those trainers are so gay!” Ridiculing someone because of a disability or mental health related issue, or because they have a physical, mental or emotional developmental delay. Referring to someone by the colour of their skin, rather than their name; using nicknames that have racial connotations; isolating someone because they come from another country or social background etc.
- **Physical abuse** – including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault, and threatening behaviour.
- **Cyberbullying** – using online spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. It can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging.

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Discrimination is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can potentially lead to actions that may cause genders, ethnic minorities, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, or people who follow specific religions or beliefs, to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued. Ensure that members or participants know that discriminatory language and behaviour will not be tolerated.

- If an incident occurs, members or participants should be informed that discriminatory language is offensive, and will not be tolerated. If a member or participant continues to make discriminatory remarks, explain in detail the effects that discrimination and bullying has on people. If it is a young person making the remarks their parents should be informed.
- If a member or participant makes persistent remarks, they should be removed from the event/activity setting in line with managing challenging behaviour and the Event/Activity Organiser should talk to them in more detail about why their comments are unacceptable.
- If the problem persists, the member should be made to understand the sanctions that will apply if they continue to use discriminatory language or behaviour.
- Consider inviting the parents/carers to the County FA (if applicable) to discuss the attitudes of the youth member in line with the procedures detailed in this policy.

### Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to the Event/Activity Organiser.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer for advice and possibly to The FA Case Management Team
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem (if applicable)
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 perpetrator will be subject to County FA disciplinary action

### In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the club under 18

1. The County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate, this may include action by The FA Safeguarding Team.
2. A range of outcomes may apply to any particular case, including referring onto the FA's Safeguarding Children Education Programme.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Social Care.