



Moycarkey Coolcroe Athletic Club

Moycarkey Coolcroe A.C. Anti-Bullying Policy

Whilst dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of **all Leaders** within our Club, it is recognised that everybody in our Club has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying. Our Club has a clear policy on bullying which is known to members and implemented by Leaders. Incidents of bullying should be dealt with immediately and not tolerated under any circumstances. Many children are reluctant to tell adults that they are being bullied. Older children are even more reluctant. This underlines the need for constant vigilance and encouragement to report bullying.

Combating Bullying

Our Club has an anti-bullying policy, which includes the following measures:

- Raising awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour
- Creating a club ethos which encourages children, Leaders and parents/guardians to report bullying and to use the procedures of the complaints mechanism of the club to address this problem
- Providing comprehensive supervision of children at all activities
- Providing a supportive environment for victims of bullying
- Obtaining the co-operation of parents/guardians to counter bullying

What is Bullying?

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children and young people.

It includes behaviours such as teasing, undermining, taunting, spiteful, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more children(and/or Adults) against a victim. Bullying can include online as well as offline behaviour.

Bullying 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.
- Posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social network sites.
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sectarianism, sexual comments, suggestions or behaviour.
- Unwanted physical contact.



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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.

Our Club 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 children and young people 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 child'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 to the club children's officer – by doing nothing you are condoning bullying.



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Support to the child:

- Children 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 a child's disability or impairment) need to be identified and addressed at the outset to enable children to approach adults for help.
- Children should have access to Helpline numbers. (Contact details should be posted up on our website and on our notice board)
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and be supported.
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved.
- Children 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 organisation/ club's bullying policy and practice.
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent(s)/carers.
- Parents 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 will be made available.
- Support should be offered to the parent(s) including information on other agencies or support lines.

Useful Contacts:

- Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC): www.ispcc.ie/shield
- Anti-Bullying Centre DCU: www4.dcu.ie/abc/index.shtml
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Sticks and Stones: 087 9015199 or www.sticksandstones.ie
- ChildLine Republic of Ireland: 1800 66 66 66 or Text Talk to 50101, www.childline.ie
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.antibullyingalliance.org



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How would you know if a child is being bullied?

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore 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 person might be getting bullied.

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

There are other possible reasons for many of the above.

Who should deal with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the health board or An Garda Síochána, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of **all Leaders** within the club but everybody in the club/organisation has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying.

How can it be prevented?

- Ensure that all members follow the code of conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.
- Deal with any incidents as they arise.
- Use a whole group policy or “no-blame approach”, i.e., not “bullying the bully” but 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, (see below).
- Reinforce that there is “a permission to tell” culture rather than a “might is right”.
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children.
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the “no blame approach” into operation.
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can’t ignore it, it hurts too much.



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- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game.
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault.

Before the “No Blame” Approach is put into operation, any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child’s parent(s)/carers. Parents will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and bully) and agreements made as to what action should be taken.

What is the ‘No Blame’ Approach?

Step 1 – Interview with the victim

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is 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 with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some 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 only 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 the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

- Would they like it if it happened to them?
- “Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what could we do to see 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 responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done.

Step 7 – Meet 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