

Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance

What is Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be defined 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.

Types of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour exists in many different forms, some are not as obvious as others, but are just as damaging to the victim. Listed below are some of the more common types of bullying, one or more method may be used by the person displaying bullying behaviour.

Physical

Physical bullying includes any physical contact that would hurt or injure a person like pushing, hitting, kicking, punching, tripping, etc. Physical bullying can put the person experiencing bullying behaviour at risk of injury and makes them feel powerless. Taking something that belongs to someone else and destroying it would also be considered a type of physical bullying.

Verbal

Verbal bullying usually takes the form of name-calling or making nasty remarks or jokes about a person's religion, gender, appearance, sexuality, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or the way they look. It can also include freezing the victim out by exclusion or spreading rumours.

Threats

Making threats against a person or their property is also a type of bullying. It can be a threat to damage or take something belonging to the victim or to hurt them physically. Often the threat is not actually carried out, but the fear created by the threat can be enough to upset the person experiencing bullying behaviour.

Exclusion

Cyber

Cyber bullying is done by sending messages, pictures, or information using electronic media, computers (email & instant messages), mobile phones (text messaging & voicemail) and social networking websites. This activity can be upsetting and harmful to the person targeted. This type of bullying behaviour can allow the person who is displaying bullying behaviour to hide their identity which may have a bigger impact on the person experiencing bullying behaviour.

Homophobic

Homophobic bullying is motivated by prejudice against a person's actual or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity- lesbians, gay males, bisexual, transsexual, or transgender people.

Racist

Racist bullying is motivated by prejudice against a person's skin colour, cultural or religious background or ethnic origin.

The Impact of Bullying Behaviour

The damage inflicted by bullying behaviour can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to juniors, to the extent that it affects their health and development, or at the extreme, cause them significant harm. Even for those not directly targeted, bullying behaviour can have a negative effect on how safe they feel, concerned all the time that they could be next or feeling guilty for not being able to help a friend.

Recognising Bullying Behaviour

There are a number of signs that may indicate a person is being 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 or drop out of newer members
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed, not eating, reduced concentration, drop in performance)
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)

This list is not exhaustive and there are other possible reasons for many of the above. The presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that bullying is actually taking place

How to prevent Bullying Behaviour

- Ensure that all members follow the Code of Conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member
- Deal with any incidents as soon as they arise
- Use a whole group policy or 'no-blame approach', i.e. working with person (s) displaying the bullying behavior and the group of juniors, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group
- Encourage juniors to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or children with specific needs
- Offer the person experiencing bullying behavior 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
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the person (s) displaying the bullying behavior at his/her own game.
- Reassure the person experiencing bullying behavior that they have done nothing wrong. Reinforce that there is a 'right to tell' culture within the club.

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 Statutory Authorities, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all Leaders within golf. You should also liaise with the appropriate Club Children's Officer & DLP.

Using the NO BLAME Approach

The **NO BLAME** approach seeks to find a resolution for the young people involved in the bullying behaviour whilst maintaining their relationship within the club or the group.

This is important for young people who often simply want the behaviour to stop, without a need for punishments to be imposed.

The **NO BLAME** approach encourages young people to recognise the impact of their behaviour and then to take responsibility for changing it. By using this approach, a previous relationship between or within a team can often be re-established; this is often a preferred option for the young people involved.

The ethos behind the NO BLAME approach is to:

EXPLAIN the problem, i.e. that someone seems to be unhappy in the club, seems to be picked on etc. and explain how that person is feeling; this should not accuse anyone.

ASK for ideas as to how to help this person

LEAVE the individuals involved to check how the behaviour has changed

SHARE the responsibility of changing the behaviour and encouraging everyone to speak to a trusted adult if there is bullying behaviour in the club

The NO BLAME approach does not attempt to get 'confessions', it seeks to get an acknowledgement of behaviour and provides an opportunity for young people to change hurtful behaviour.

There may be issues that are not resolved through the NO BLAME approach, where behaviour continues.

Bullying behaviour is a breach of a code of conduct and may have to be dealt with through a disciplinary process. However, the outcome for young people is far better when issues can be resolved through the NO BLAME approach.

NO BLAME APPROACH

STEP 1: MEET WITH THE JUNIOR WHO IS THE TARGET OF THE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

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

- What was the behaviour that has caused upset?
- How are you feeling to check if they are emotionally/physically hurt?
- Who was involved in the behaviour, i.e. was it in your own peer group?
- When and where did it happen?
- Make sure you actively listen and advise the young person of the next steps that will be taken, but important also to ask what they want done.

STEP 2: MEET WITH ALL INVOLVED

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include those who initiated the bullying behaviour, some of the backup and if necessary you might want to ask the audience

The meeting should be informal, and it is much better to try to meet the individuals before meeting as a group. If you meet with a group keep the number controllable and you should only deal with the topic of concern i.e. the culture of cooperation required within the club for everyone to enjoy their time. Make sure everyone knows you are there to get their point of view and find their solutions.

STEP 3: EXPLAIN THE PROBLEM

Talk about the hurt caused in general terms without apportioning blame, e.g. you might suggest the target of the bullying behaviour doesn't seem to be happy in the club (if they are comfortable with this approach), and you have heard they have been called names/left out/picked on etc. It might be helpful to ask questions like:

- What do you think they are feeling?
- How would you feel if it was you?
- What would you do if it happened to you?
- What could we do to see it does not happen again?

You should not use specific details of the incident or allocate blame, however explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, being rejected, laughed at and how that the person may be feeling.

Listen and watch out for reactions and pick up on comments without accusing or if in a group without isolating anyone; this is an opportunity to find out how others in the group feel about bullying behaviour.

STEP 4: ASK THE GROUP/INDIVIDUAL FOR THEIR IDEAS

At this stage the group or individual is encouraged to suggest ways that would make a target of the bullying behaviour feel happier. Use phrases like: "if it were you what would help you....", to encourage a response.

Listen to all suggestions and note them, especially positive responses as these will help create an environment for young people involved to work together.

STEP 5: LEAVE IT TO THE GROUP OR INDIVIDUAL

Now the problem has been identified and solutions suggest it is now handed over to the group/individual to act on. Arrange what actions they will take and to meet again a certain time frame. You have now passed the responsibility over to the group or the individual to take the suggested action within that time. Please ensure the person who directly experienced the bullying behaviour is happy with this and the level of supervision put in place to monitor any other risks.

STEP 6: MEET THEM AGAIN

Meet everyone, including the person who had been the ring leader for the bullying behaviour and the target of the behaviour; discuss how things are going and check if there have been other incidents.

This allows for continual monitoring and keeps everyone involved in the process.

The parents of the young people involved should be informed of the actions taken.

STEP 7: SHARE THE RESPONSIBILITY

Meet with the wider group or team to discuss what should be in place to help prevent further incidents and what impact bullying behaviour may have on everyone, e.g. less free time or social activities, or other actions might need to be imposed as a preventative measure.

Any action should be used in the spirit of prevention, not as a punishment.

Useful Contacts

Childline ROI Tel: 1800 66 66 66 or Text Talk to 50101 www.childline.ie