

County Durham Sport

Anti Bullying Guidance

The purpose of this document is to provide anti bullying guidance for all individuals/groups involved in working with children and young people in sport. It should be used by organisations and clubs to assist in the development of anti bullying procedures in conjunction with any guidance produced by the relevant National Governing Body.

1) Introduction and Background

This document aims to raise awareness of bullying and its effects as well as identifying possible signs of bullying and how to address a bullying situation.

Bullying can be defined as;

“Deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves”

Both girls and boys can be bullied although it seems more conspicuous in boys. Although bullying often takes place in schools, research shows that it also takes place where there is inadequate supervision i.e. the playground, on the way to and from school, at a sporting event or in the changing room.

Different types of bullying include: -

- Physical
- Emotional
- Verbal
- Racist
- Sexual
- Homophobic

Bullies come from all walks of life. They bully for a variety of reasons and may have even been abused themselves. Typically, bullies can have a low self esteem, be excitable, aggressive and jealous. Crucially they have learned how to gain power over others and there is increasing evidence to suggest that this abuse of power can lead to crime.

However bullying doesn't necessarily have to be one child bullying another, it can be: -

- A parent who pushes a child too hard
- A coach who shouts or humiliates a child
- A club official who places unfair pressure on a child

2) Guidance

It may be difficult to determine if a child is being bullied due to the competitive nature of a particular sport. Signs to look out for include: -

- Behavioural changes
- Changes to their normal routine
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Attempts or threatens suicide
- Unwillingness to go to school / sports clubs
- Feels ill before training
- Return home with torn clothes / missing possessions

The damage inflicted by bullying can be frequently underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people, to the extent that it affects their health and development or in extreme cases, cause them significant harm.

If your sporting club is part of any National Governing Body, find out what their policy is on bullying and make sure that you have all of the relevant documents needed for your club (i.e supporting literature and posters). Usually National Governing Bodies have a designated Welfare Officer who is there to provide information and guidance on what to do if a child is being bullied.

If you think a person is being bullied, report the case immediately to the Welfare Officer if applicable. If the victim approaches you and says they are being bullied, stay calm and make notes (if possible) about any incidents which have occurred. Take care when talking to the bullying victim to ensure that you do not put them in any unnecessary danger as a result of you taking any action. Reassure the victim that you will help them, explain that you may have to report the case to someone in authority (A Welfare Officer and if the person is under the age of 18, the child's parents). Keep accurate records of what happened together with any names of those involved and action taken.

If your club is not part of a National Governing Body, report the case of bullying to the highest senior member of your club and follow any procedures which have been put into place regarding bullying. Report the case to the victim's parents and if the bully is a young child, report the case to their parents.

Try to talk to the bully to get them to understand the consequences of their actions and impose sanctions if necessary.

3) Kidscape

A voluntary charity was set up in 1984 with the aim of teaching children personal safety. Kidscape was the first nation-wide prevention programme for children dealing with personal safety. When research was initially conducted, it was thought that the main outcome would be to prevent children from talking to strangers and putting themselves in danger. However, it was found that the main threat to children was actually bullying.

Kidscape offer a helpline offering support and advice to parents of bullied children, booklets, literature, posters, training guides and educational videos on bullying, child protection and parenting.

Kidscape have published some frightening statistics on the result of bullying amongst youths.

- Each year, 10 – 14 youth suicides are directly attributed to bullying (Figures gathered by The Home Office)
- Bullied Children are six times more likely to contemplate suicide than their non bullied counterparts
- 1 in 12 children are badly bullied to the point that it affects their education, relationships and even prospects for jobs in later life.

The Kidscape website has lots of useful information listed for both parents and children on how to tackle bullying and keeping children safe from harm www.kidscape.org.uk

This guidance has been adapted from the following resources:

England Netball Anti – Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure
The Rugby Football League Child Protection Policy Implementation and Procedures
Baseball Softball UK Welfare Policy
Amateur Swimming Association Child Protection Policy Procedures and Guidelines
Badminton England Child Protection Policy and Implementation Procedure
Grand National Archery Association Protection of Child & Vulnerable Adult Policy
England Cricket Board Safeguarding Children Policy
The FA Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Child Protection Policy
Kidscape - www.kidscape.org.uk