

Whitegrove F.C.



Anti-Bullying Policy

Version 1.0

Last Reviewed: 01/07/2013

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 and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all club members or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

We are a *TELLING* club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club welfare officer or any committee member.

What is Bullying?

- Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- 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
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Cyberbullying - when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger, tweets), to deliberately upset someone.

Emotional bullying is the most common form and is easily missed by a manager/coach. Things to look out for are the quieter children being whispered to, or comments made to out of earshot of the coaches. The victim may then be reluctant to play and due to their quiet nature will find it difficult to “tell” and may ultimately leave the team. It is important to identify any players who become less involved and make opportunities for one-to-one chats to ensure they are enjoying football and are not experiencing emotional bullying.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying 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. This club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All club members, coaches, officials and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is
- All club members, officials and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
- All players and parents/carers should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Players and parents/carers should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported
- Bullying will not be tolerated
- All club members, coaches, officials and parents/carers should have an appreciation of the signs and indicators of bullying.

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

- says he or she is being bullied
- is unwilling to go to club sessions
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- feels ill before training 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.

Or, in more extreme cases, if a child:

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

Procedures

1. If an incident occurs or an allegation is made **act quickly**. Members should be informed that discriminatory and bullying language is offensive, and will not be tolerated. Their parents should be informed verbally followed by an email copying in the Club Welfare Officer. A reconciliation should be attempted between both parties as soon as the situation is brought to light. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

3. If the problem persists, the member and their parents will be asked to come in for a meeting to discuss the problem and they should be made to understand the sanctions that will apply if the bullying behaviour continues.
4. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution
5. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the County FA Child Protection Officer for advice and possibly to the FA Case Management System
6. If necessary and appropriate, Police and or School will be consulted

Club Action

If the club decides it is appropriate to deal with the situation we will follow the procedure outlined below.

1. A panel of at least 2 Club members, selected as appropriate by the Club Welfare Officer, should meet with the parents/carers and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account
2. The same two people should meet with the alleged bully and parents/carers and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed
3. If the two people investigating agree that bullying has occurred and that reconciliation attempts have failed, the individual should be issued with (but not necessarily limited to) a formal warning in the first instance.
4. The parent/carers of the bully or bullied player should be asked to attend training sessions. The Club Committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated
5. All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.
6. If the bullying is found to continue, despite the above actions having taken place, a 4 week suspension to include 4 training sessions and their corresponding league matches is then implemented.
7. All communication between parties should be copied to the CWO.

In the Case of Adults Reported to be Bullying Anyone within the Club, Under 18

1. The CFA CPO should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, The FA's Child Protection and Best Practice awareness training may be recommended
3. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Social Services.