



# **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT GUIDANCE**

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## 1 Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all athletes or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

## 2 Definitions

### Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to any of the 'protected characteristics' (as per the Equality Act) which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

### Bullying

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. It is not the intention of the perpetrator that is key in deciding if harassment or bullying has occurred, but whether the behaviour is unacceptable by reasonable normal standards and is disadvantageous or unwelcome to the person or people subjected to it or witnessing it.

## 3 Individual Responsibilities:

All individuals are responsible for their own behaviour and for ensuring that they comply with the policy. Members can help prevent harassment by:

- Setting a positive example by treating others with respect
- Being aware of the Club's policy and complying with it
- Avoiding making personal comments
- Not accepting behaviour that may be offensive when directed against you or others, and takes positive action to ensure that it is challenged and/or reported.

## 4 Responsibilities of the committee

All committee members have a responsibility to implement this policy and to bring it to the attention of members in the club, in order to establish and maintain a social environment free of harassment. They must:

- treat a complaint seriously and deal with it promptly and confidentially, giving the club member and the alleged perpetrator full support during the whole process
- set a positive example by treating others with respect and setting standards of acceptable behaviour;
- promote a training environment where harassment is unacceptable and not tolerated
- tackle, and where possible, resolve incidents of harassment or bullying
- consult with club welfare officer as soon as practicable for advice and support

## 5 Welfare Support and Procedures

If you are unsuccessful in dealing with the situation yourself or feel unable to address this yourself, you should discuss this with your club welfare officer. The welfare officer may:

- Speak to both parties individually and will then consider what action is necessary. It will be the welfare officer's responsibility to attempt to resolve the situation, and ensure cooperation from both parties.

- Arrange a meeting with both parties together to discuss the issue with the aim of finding a resolution. The welfare officer may make recommendations to both parties during this meeting and will also be clear in terms of their expectations of standards of behaviour within the team
- Consider that no further action is necessary and should feedback to the individual as to why they reached that decision and support the individual in moving forward.
- If this is not successful or not considered by the welfare officer to be appropriate, they may recommend mediation
- Discussions with the member will be noted, followed up and recorded. Any outcomes will be confirmed in writing. Informal discussions will be noted as such.
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the committee or to UKA for advice and if necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped immediately and if bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

Recommended club action If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation they should follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/not appropriate a small panel (disciplinary committee) should meet with the club member alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same panel should meet with the alleged member who has instigated bullying and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has in their view taken place the members should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time. The members have a right to request an appeal in which case a new panel consisting of members who have not been party to the case can investigate the evidence and procedures.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying athletes under 18

1. UKA should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a coach, child protection awareness training may be recommended.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the police, social services or judicial complaints procedure

## **6. Examples of Unacceptable Behaviour which can constitute Bullying and Harassment**

- Bullying by exclusion – this may take the form of social isolation and/or exclusion from meetings – ‘freezing out’ or ignoring
- Deliberate withholding of information with intention of affecting a members performance
- Unfair and destructive criticism
- Intimidating behaviour
- Intrusive behaviour such as staring, pestering or spying
- Verbal abuse and spreading of unfounded rumours
- Humiliation or ridicule
- Unwanted physical contact
- Physical attack or threats
- Telling offensives jokes, using offensive language, gossip

- Pressure for sexual or other favours
- Making will and inaccurate accusations or malicious complaints
- Persistent criticism or persecution through threats
- Cyber-bullying. This is the use of information and communication technology to support deliberate and hostile attempts to hurt, upset or embarrass another person. It can include activities such as (this list is not exhaustive):

Offensive emails

Email threats

Posts to blogs and leaving comments on social networking sites

Propagating defamatory gossip about members on social media sites

Threats or offensive comments sent to a member's mobile phone

Harassment by email