

Wickham Wanderers Youth Football Club Anti-Bullying Policy

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 in our club. If bullying does occur, all club members or parents should be able to tell and know that the 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

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. The impact upon a child or young person can be devastating and in some cases affect all aspects of their life, in extreme cases it can lead to suicide threats or even attempts.

The 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 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

Signs and indicators

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that 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 bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what’s wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases:

- 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. Report bullying to the Club Welfare Officer or a member of the clubs committee or contact the County Football Associations Child Protection Officer
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the CFA CPO for advise and possibly to The FA Case Management System
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, the Police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
7. If mediation fails and the 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, it will follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem

2. If this fails/is not appropriate, a small panel (made up from the chairman, CWO, secretary, committee members) should meet with the parent/carer 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.
3. The same three members should meet with the alleged bully and parents/carer and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed by all as a true account.
4. If bullying has in their view taken place, the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
5. In some cases the parent of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
6. All coaches involved with both parties should be aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone in 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 case where the allegation is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, The FA's Child Protection and Best Practise awareness training may be recommended.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Social Services.

Prevention:

- The Club has a written constitution which includes what is acceptable proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part
- All club members and parents will sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club
- The CWO will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

This policy is based on guidance provide to schools by KIDSCAPE. KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying. KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300 or you can access their website via www.kidscape.org.uk

You may also wish to access www.bullying.co.uk another website designed to give advice and guidance to parents and children who are faced with dealing with bullying.