



**Bovingdon Football Club  
Green Lane, Bovingdon  
Anti-Bullying policy**

## **Introduction**

Bovingdon Football Club 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. This club is committed to playing its part to teach players to treat each other with respect.

## **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
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Discrimination racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, homophobic comments, jokes about disabled people, sexist comments,
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

## **Cyberbullying**

This is when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger, tweets), to deliberately upset someone. Bullies often feel anonymous and 'distanced' from the incident when it takes place online and 'bystanders' can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding the information on. There is a growing trend for bullying to occur online or via texts – bullies no longer rely on being physically near to the young person.

Bovingdon Football club commits to ensure our website websites and/or social networking pages are being used appropriately and any online bullying will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with procedures detailed in this policy.

## **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.

## **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 the 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.

## **Bullying as a result of any form of discrimination**

Discrimination is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can potentially lead to actions that may cause women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, or people who follow specific religions or beliefs, to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued.

### ***Discriminatory language and behaviour will not be tolerated at Bovingdon Football Club***

#### **Club Procedures**

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer or a member of the clubs committee
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the County FA Welfare Officer for advice and possibly to The FA Case Management Team
3. Parents will 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 will 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.

#### **Club action**

If the club decides it is appropriate to deal with the situation they 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/not appropriate a small panel (made up from Chairman, Club Welfare Officer, Secretary, committee members) should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes will be taken for clarity, which will be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same 3 persons will meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes will again be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has in the club's view taken place the individual will be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration will be given 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 will monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
6. All coaches involved with both individuals will be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

#### **In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the club under 18**

7. The County Welfare Officer will be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate, this may include action by The FA Safeguarding Team.
8. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, The FA's Safeguarding Children Education Programme may be recommended.
9. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Social Care.