

# **SBFC Academy - Anti-Bullying Policy**

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At **SBFC** we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members so they can participate in soccer 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 know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. This Club is committed to playing its part to teach players to treat each other with respect.

## **Objectives of this Policy**

- All Club members, coaches, officials and parents should understand 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 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 should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

## **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:

- Being unfriendly, sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding soccer boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

## **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying occurs when someone uses technology—such as mobile phones or the internet (including social media, chat rooms, and texting)—to intentionally hurt another person. Bullies often feel a sense of anonymity and distance when acting online, which can embolden their behavior. Additionally, bystanders can easily become complicit by sharing or forwarding harmful messages. Unfortunately, there's a growing trend of bullying occurring in these digital spaces, allowing bullies to target individuals without being physically present. It's essential to recognize this issue and take steps to address and prevent it.

## **Our Commitment**

**SBFC** is committed to ensuring that our website and social media pages are used appropriately. We take online bullying seriously and will address any incidents swiftly and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy. Our goal is to maintain a safe and respectful online environment for everyone.

## **Why is it important to respond to Bullying?**

Bullying is harmful, and no one deserves to be a victim. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity. It's important for those who engage in bullying to learn healthier, more appropriate ways to interact. Our Club is dedicated to responding promptly and effectively to any incidents of bullying, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all members.

## **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
- continually 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**

Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability. Generally, these forms of bullying look like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include:

- Verbal bullying including derogatory comments, lies, false rumors, teasing, ridicule and bad names.
- Emotional bullying includes being unfriendly, sending hurtful or tormenting messages via social media forms.
- Bullying through social exclusion or isolation, being ignored and or left out
- Physical bullying includes pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any other use of violence
- Being attacked because of their religion, race or color, gender or sexuality including but not limited to taunts, graffiti, gestures etc.
- Sexually unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Misuse of associated technology such as unwanted camera and video usage and social networking exposure

## **Procedures**

1. Report Bullying incidents to a member of the Club staff.
2. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.
3. If necessary and appropriate, the OPP will be consulted.
4. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly.
5. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
6. 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 for them to deal with the situation, they will follow the procedure outlined below:

- Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
- If this fails/not appropriate a small panel (made up from Selected individuals from the **SBFC** Board of Directors) should meet with the parent 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.
- The same persons should 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 should again be taken and agreed.
- 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 given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
- 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.
- All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.
- More serious cases may be referred to the OPP.

## Prevention

- The Club has a Code of Conduct, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part.
- All Club members and parents will sign to accept the Code of Conduct upon joining the Club.
- The Club 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