



Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

We don't put up with bullying at our club. You should tell someone if you see bullying.

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members so they can play tennis in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all players or parent 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 know that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club child protection officer or a member of the committee.

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 carried out by children or adults.

Bullying can have lots of different forms:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding racquets/other equipment, 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

Here are some examples of what we call 'bullying':

- Someone calling you names
- Being threatened
- Being pressurised to give someone your money or your things
- Being hit or pushed
- Having possessions damaged or broken
- Someone spreading rumours about you or your family
- Someone posting hurtful comments or pictures on the web (such as on Facebook)

Why do we care about bullying?

Bullying is a serious problem. You have the right to stop it.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Players who are bullying need to learn a different way of behaving.

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

Objectives of this Policy

- To make sure that the club finds out about bullying and deals with it as well as possible.
- All committee members, coaches, volunteers, players and parent should know what bullying is.
- All committee members, coaches and volunteers should know and understand this policy and should follow it when bullying is reported.
- All players and parent should know about this policy, and should understand what to 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.

How to spot if someone is being bullied?

A child might show that he or she is being bullied in lots of ways. 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 torn/damaged clothes or damaged possessions
- 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 unlikely explanations of any of the above

In more extreme cases

- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Attempt or threatens suicide or runs away

These signs and behaviour may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to the club child protection officer, a member of the club committee or ring the LTA Safeguarding Team.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the club should contact the LTA for advice.
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 and threats of bullying will be investigated and bullying will be stopped as quickly as possible.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour and disciplinary action will also be considered where there have been serious acts of misconduct.
7. The club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution if the bully does not change his or her behaviour.

How we will work with the bully and the victim

If we decide (if necessary after receiving advice from the LTA) that it is appropriate for us to deal with the situation, we will follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Where the victim is comfortable to do so and the bullying has not become very serious, reconciliation will be attempted by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/or is not appropriate a small panel (made up from Chairman, Child Protection Officer, Secretary, Committee members) will meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Notes/minutes will be taken for clarity, and these should be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same panel 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 be taken and agreed.

4. If bullying has, in their view, taken place, the panel will consider whether it is serious enough to take disciplinary action immediately under the club's normal procedures.
5. If disciplinary action is not taken immediately, the player 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.
6. 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.
7. All coaches involved with both players should be made aware of the concerns and outcomes of the process i.e. the warning.

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

1. We will contact the LTA for advice on the action to be taken. Bullying by an adult is child abuse and allegations will be treated very seriously.
2. In most cases in which adults are found to have bullied children, child protection awareness training is the minimum likely outcome. Serious disciplinary action by the club and/or the LTA could also be taken.
3. More serious cases may be referred to statutory services such as the police or social services. We will consult statutory services at an early stage if we think that this could be relevant.

Prevention

- The club has or is developing a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti bullying policy is one part.
- All players and parent will sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club.
- The club child protection officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise, the club will consider meeting with players to discuss the issue openly and constructively, seeking support from the LTA as necessary.