



**WATERFORD**  
Football Club

# ANTI-BULLYING

## OUR MESSAGE

Waterford FC is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our participants. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our Club. If bullying does occur, all participants or parents/carers and colleagues should be able to report an incident and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

## DEFINING BULLYING?

**Bullying** is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim and may be;

- Discriminatory - i.e. racial taunts, graffiti ,gestures ,homophobic comments, jokes about disabled people, sexist comments.
- Emotional – i.e. being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)
- Physical – i.e. pushing ,kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Sexual – i.e. unwanted physical contactor sexually abusive comments
- Verbal –name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours,teasing.

We at Waterford FC recognise that while bullying can happen to any Child, some may be more vulnerable. These include: Children with additional needs; those from ethnic minority and migrant groups; from the Traveller community; lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) Children and those perceived to be LGBT; and Children of minority religious faiths.



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### SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF BULLYING

All adults should be aware of the following indicators and signs that a child may be being bullied. They should act swiftly and investigate where the child;

- Says they are being bullied
- Is anxious about travelling to and from the club/academy for example requesting parents to drive or collect them rather than using a team bus.
- Sudden Unwillingness to go to the academy or refusal to attend training sessions
- Deterioration in performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in academy activities.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothes
- Reluctance or refusal to say what is troubling them.

It is important to state that this is not an exhaustive list and signs may vary depending on the individual or the circumstances.

Similarly, the above signs do not necessarily mean that a young player is being bullied but they do warrant investigation in order to establish what might be affecting the player.

### CYBERBULLYING

This is when a person uses technology such as computers, mobile phones or the internet to deliberately upset someone else.

Bullies no longer rely on being physically near the young person to cause them harm.

Some examples of Cyberbullying are;

- **Denigration:** Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- **Harassment:** Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- **Impersonation:** Posting Offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name



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- **Flaming:** Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke and online fight
- **Trickery:** Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online.
- **Outing:** Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images such as the child's home address or sexual orientation particularly where they are part of the LGBTQI+ community
- **Cyber stalking:** On going harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his or her safety

### **OUR OBJECTIVES**

- As a club we want to create a climate and culture that is welcoming of differences
- To provide clear procedures on how to note, report, investigate and deal with bullying behaviour
- All participants, parents/carers and colleagues should have an understanding of the meaning of bullying.
- To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring through which all aspects of club activities particularly those including children or young people, are kept under supervision.
- All participants, parents/carers and colleagues should be aware of the anti-bullying policy.
- As a Club ,we take bullying seriously. Participants and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

### **WHY WE THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO DEAL WITH BULLYING**

- Bullying hurts.
- No one deserves to be a victim of bullying.
- Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.



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- Individuals who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving.
- Waterford FC has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### **PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH A REPORT OF BULLYING**

- All incidents of bullying should be reported to the Children's Officer who will then investigate and deal with the incident. The primary aim shall be to resolve the issue and as far as practicable restore the relationships of the involved parties.
- Parents should be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem and ways in which they can reinforce the actions being taken by the Club as well as supporting the Child/young people involved in the incident.
- Consultation and discussion with the respective Parents is particularly important and necessary where the Children's Officer has determined that bullying has occurred.
- If necessary and appropriate, An Garda Síochána will be consulted.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
- If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Where the Children's Officer decides it is appropriate for the Club to deal with the reported bullying situation they should 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 of Designated Liaison Person Children's Officer and Club Secretary) shall meet with



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- the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity and agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same 3 Club Officials shall 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.
  4. If bullying has in their view taken place the individual shall be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration shall 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 may be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club committee shall monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
  6. All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

### **HOW TO TELL IF A BULLYING INCIDENT HAS BEEN EFFECTIVELY HANDLED**

The Children's Officer and the Club shall take the following factors into account;

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, or their parents.

### **PREVENTION**



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- The club will have a written Safeguarding Policy, 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 be required to sign and accept the Safeguarding policy upon joining the club.
- The Children's Officer shall 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.

### **COMMUNICATION OF THIS POLICY**

Our Anti-Bullying policy shall be made available to all Club personnel, published on our Website and provided to the Parents/Guardians

The DLP & Children's Officer shall ensure that the policy is regularly highlighted and promoted on a club wide basis with particular attention being given to incoming Young players and their Parents/Guardians. This shall include making sure they know which club officials are responsible for handling bullying concerns.