

Hertfordshire Cheetahs Anti Bullying Policy

Purpose and aim

The aim of this procedure is to provide detailed guidance Hertfordshire Cheetahs members, parents and the wider American football community (BAFA) who may experience bullying, so that they will know what to do if an incident of bullying occurs between children and young people.

The procedure also aims to ensure that the Hertfordshire Cheetahs responds fairly and consistently to incidents of bullying, recognising that those who bully often have needs too.

This procedure applies to all children and young people who attend events, training and games and association member events who may be bullied, behave in a bullying way towards others or observe someone being bullied.

It also applies to all coaches and volunteers who observe bullying between children and young people within the club, who may have incidents of bullying reported to them or who may be concerned that a child/young person is showing signs of being bullied.

If an adult is bullying a child/young person, this should be reported under the safeguarding procedures. If a child or young person is bullying another child to the extent that it may cause significant harm, then it will also need to be dealt with under safeguarding procedures.

Definition

Bullying has been recognised and defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or sectarian remarks, threats, name-calling) and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of his peer group). The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

It can include:

- Verbal teasing or making fun of someone
- Excluding children from games and conversations
- Pressurising other children not to be friends with the person who is being bullied
- Spreading hurtful rumours or passing around inappropriate photographs/images/drawings
- Cyberbullying (i.e. using computers or mobile phones to bully someone)
- Shouting at someone
- Stealing or damaging someone's possessions
- Making threats
- Forcing someone to do something embarrassing, harmful or dangerous
- Harassment on the basis of race, gender, sexuality or disability

- Physical or sexual assault (although all sexual incidents and all but very minor physical incidents constitute abuse and must be dealt with in accordance with child protection procedures).

The Signs And Symptoms Of Bullying

If someone is being bullied, they might not tell anyone directly. This could be because they have been threatened and are afraid to say anything or because they believe that nothing can be done about it and that telling someone will only make it worse. It could even be because they don't recognise that what is happening to them is bullying.

Signs that someone may be being bullied could include:

- Being unhappy, withdrawn and unwilling to spend time in a group, especially during unstructured periods e.g. break time
- Being without friends
- Missing meetings and activities at their club/IAFA and/or expressing a reluctance to attend
- Being clingy with adults
- Appearing to lose possessions or money (things that may have really been stolen by or given away to bullies)
- Unexplained injuries
- Uncharacteristic illness or aggression. Some of these signs might also indicate abuse at the hands of adults or other negative experiences, so they should be treated with caution.

What To Do If You Are Being Bullied

If you are being bullied, you should never keep it to yourself. Tell someone you trust. This could be a club coach, the club welfare officer, any member of your club or someone else. In the case of a child, this could also be your parent or carer. You may prefer to tell another young person first and ask that person to help you tell an adult.

What To Do If You Observe A Child Or Young Person Being Bullied Or If Someone Tells You He/She Is Being Bullied

If someone tells you that he or she is being bullied, don't try to deal with it yourself. Talk to the person about getting help from an adult. Try to persuade him or her to go with you to explain the situation to a club coach, the club welfare officer, any member of your club or someone else you trust. If he/she won't do this, the best way to help is to explain that you will have to tell an adult yourself - and then go ahead and tell someone.

If you are an adult and someone tells you that he or she is being bullied, take the allegation seriously. Do not tell him/her to stop being silly or dismiss what has been said. This will not help and will make the individual feel let down and less inclined to tell anyone else. Listen to the full account of what is going on and take appropriate action – report the incident to your club welfare officer.

If you observe the bullying directly, act assertively to put a stop to it. Explain to all concerned that the incident will have to be reported properly to stop it happening again. In the case of a child, unless the incident is minor and can be dealt with informally, the child's parent or carer should be informed within one working day by the club welfare officer. If possible, there should be a three-way meeting between the child, the club welfare officer and the parent/carers.

If the bullying is taking place in another environment (e.g. school), the club welfare officer should ask what support the individual would like, in order to engage with whoever the responsible agencies might be. The



club welfare officer should aim to work in partnership with the individual, parent (where applicable) and any other people who may be involved.

If the bullying is taking place within the club, the individual should be reassured that it will be dealt with as a priority and should be asked for their views on what would be helpful to deal with the situation.

The club welfare officer, having spoken to the individual who has been bullied and the parent/carer (where it is a child), should also speak to the bully (or bullies) and obtain their account of what has happened or is happening. This should be noted in writing and the parents/carers of the bully (or bullies) should be informed. The bully and his or her parents/carers should be asked for their views on what should be done to put a stop to any further bullying and to repair the damage that has been done.

Apart from very minor incidents that have been directly observed and dealt with at the time, all bullying that takes place should be discussed within the club within five working days. At the meeting, the bullying incident should be discussed, and the details of a draft plan drawn up to address the situation, taking into account any suggestions made by the individual involved and their parents/carers where applicable.

The following areas should be covered:

- Details of any apology that has been or should be offered by the bully (or bullies)
- Details of any support for the person who has been bullied e.g. use of buddy scheme, extra input from the club, referral to another service
- Details of any consequences for the bully in addition to making an apology
- Details of any support for the bully, with reference to the code of conduct
- Details of any further discussions or work to be done with others in the group, including children who may have observed or encouraged the bullying
- Details of any changes in how the club committee and coaching group may handle issues of bullying in future. The plan should be shared with the individual concerned and their parents and should be reviewed regularly.

Useful contacts

BAFA - Safeguarding@britishamericanfootball.org

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000

Childline 0800 1111 / www.childline.org.uk

Kidscape www.kidscape.org.uk

Anti-Bullying Alliance www.antibullyingalliance.org

This procedure should be reviewed every two years.

Date of publication: **October 2020**

Created by: *Fiona Dickins*

Welfare Officer

Date of last review: October 2020

Date of next review: October 2022

The person responsible for reviewing it is: The club welfare officer – (at this time Mrs Fiona Dickins)



APPENDIX A

Hertfordshire Cheetahs Anti-Bullying Statement

The Hertfordshire Cheetahs values of all its members, and will not tolerate repeated, aggressive behaviour (verbal or physical) by an individual or group against others. Respect is one of our core values and Hertfordshire Cheetahs is committed to tackling bullying so that players, coaches, and committee members can feel safe within their American football club. Incidents of bullying are breaches of the club's Codes of Conduct.

All members should:

- Respect each other and all those working as part of the club
- Tell an adult or someone you trust if you are being bullied
- Remember - it's not your fault
- Stand-up to bullying behaviour by telling the Club Welfare Officer what you've seen or heard
- Not to change (the way you are or the way you behave) to fit in with the bully
- Remember – it's ok to tell someone how you feel or about what you've seen or heard

Signed: *Fiona Dickins*

Club Welfare Officer

On behalf of players, coaches and committee members at Hertfordshire Cheetahs American Football Club

Date: October 2020