

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Last Updated: 1st May 2022

Last Approved by Board: September 2022

The terms 'child' and 'young person' describe any person under the age of 18. References to 'parents' should be read as parents and carers inclusively.

1. OUR STATEMENT

BF is committed to ensuring that participants can participate in fencing in caring, friendly and safe environments for all our members so they can participate in fencing in a relaxed, secure and welcoming atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in fencing.

If bullying does occur, all members should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the welfare officer (event or club) as soon as they have concerns.

Serious incidents should also be reported directly to British Fencing.
<https://www.britishfencing.com/welfare-zone/report-a-concern/>.

BULLYING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

2. WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour with an intention to cause harm, that involves a real or perceived power imbalance, repeated over a period of time.

Bullying can be experienced by anyone, irrespective of age.

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, on <https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/bullying-a-definition> it is behaviour that is:

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- *repeated*
- *intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally*

often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. 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
- Cyber -
 - Any issues relating to the internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse.
 - Mobile threats by text messaging & calls
 - Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

3. 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. The sport has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

- All members, coaches, volunteers and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is
- All members, coaches and volunteers should know what the policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
- All players and parents should know what the policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises
- As a sport, we take bullying seriously. Anyone involved in fencing should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 REPORTING

As for all cases of harassment and abuse, bullying should be reported.

Bullying can be reported to

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- the club welfare officer,
- member of the club committee
- a trusted adult.

Bullying can also be reported directly to British Fencing. <https://www.britishfencing.com/welfare-zone/report-a-concern/>.

5.2 RESPONDING TO REPORTS OF BULLYING

An investigation will take place (either led by the club under its Safeguarding Procedures, or for more serious cases by BF under the BF Safeguarding Procedures).

Depending on the outcome of the investigation, disciplinary action may follow.

Actions taken will include:

1. The bullying behaviour, or threats of bullying, must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
2. In serious cases involving U18s parents should be informed and asked to take part in a meeting to discuss the problem
3. If necessary and appropriate, Statutory Authorities will be consulted
4. If necessary and appropriate, Safeguarding Leads in associated organisations (eg schools, universities) will be contacted
5. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
6. If mediation fails and the bullying continues further disciplinary action will be taken

5.3 RECOMMENDED CLUB ACTION

In cases of serious bullying, incidents should be referred to BF's Lead Safeguarding Officer (safeguarding@britishfencing.com).

If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow their existing Safeguarding procedures.

Sample Safeguarding Procedural Steps (Bullying)

1. It may be appropriate to attempt a form of reconciliation, for example 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 of club officers should meet with the person (parent and child in the case of U18s) making the allegation to obtain more information. This panel will normally include the Welfare Officer. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account
3. The same panel should meet with the alleged bully (and parent/s in U18), detail the allegation and allow them an opportunity of reply. Minutes should again be taken and agreed

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4. If it is considered that bullying has taken place, the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action if the bullying continues, i.e. temporary or permanent suspension. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not repeated
5. All appropriate coaches, volunteers or team managers involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning
6. If the club is unable to resolve the matter they should refer the case to BF's Lead Safeguarding Officer.

Sample Outcomes

1. The bully (bullies) may be asked to apologise
2. If possible, the people concerned will be reconciled
3. Monitoring should be put in place to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
4. In serious cases, suspension or exclusion will be considered

6. PREVENTION

1. The club should have a written constitution and code of conduct as to what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part.
2. All club members and parents should sign up to this code of conduct (which must include reference to bullying) on joining the club. Consideration should be given to ensuring that visitors are also signed up to club policies and procedures.
3. The Club Welfare Officer should raise awareness about bullying and why it matters. This should be done on an annual basis.
4. All Coaches are responsible for creating environments where bullying does not take place and stopping/calling out any incidents of bullying as soon as they arise.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further help and guidance can be obtained from the following:

- Children's Legal Centre 0845 345 4345
- KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4) 0845 1 205 204 www.kidscape.org.uk
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
- Youth Access 020 8772 9900

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- Bullying Online www.bullying.co.uk

This policy is based on guidance provided to schools by KIDSCAPE. KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying.

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