

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

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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.

As a sport, we take bullying seriously. Anyone involved in fencing should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported

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. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

All participants (including fencers, members, coaches, volunteers and parents) in fencing should

- have an understanding of what bullying is
- know what the policy is on bullying,
- understand how to report bullying
- understand what to do if bullying is reported to them

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 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:

- *repeated*
- *intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally*
- *often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation*

3.2 CHILD/YOUNG PERSON

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.

3.3 ADULT AT RISK

The term 'adult at risk' uses the definition contained within the Care Act 2014 in referring an adult who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and;
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and;
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.

4. FORMS AND IMPACTS OF BULLYING

Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim which can be long lasting. These impacts can include

- Depression and anxiety
- Increased feelings of sadness and loneliness,
- Changes in sleep and eating patterns
- Health complaints
- Decreased academic achievement

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

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- 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

5. 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. Bullying not only harms the individual but also those that care about them. It also harms the sport, our clubs and our competitions through reputational damage and reduced participation.

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

For those individuals that behave in a bullying manner, the earlier that this is addressed with them the better to ensure (as much as is reasonably possible) that they do not repeat the behaviour.

6. PROCEDURES

6.1 REPORTING

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

Bullying can be reported to

- the club welfare officer
- a trusted adult

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

6.2 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, will be investigated and all efforts should be made to stop the bullying quickly.

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2. In serious cases involving U18s parents should be informed and asked to take part in a meeting to discuss the problem. If an adult at risk is affected, consideration should be given to whether their carer should be informed as appropriate. However, this must only be done with the consent of the adult at risk.
3. If necessary and appropriate, Statutory Authorities will be consulted.
4. If necessary and appropriate, Safeguarding Leads in associated organisations (eg schools, universities) may be contacted.
5. An attempt will be made to help the individual exhibiting bullying behaviour change their behaviour. This will include provision of clear guidance on what the unacceptable behaviour is and a discussion on how it can be prevented. It may be appropriate to put in place protective measures which may include suspension of the individual from certain activities or a request for parental supervision. These will be proportionate.
6. If the attempt to change the behaviour fails and the bullying continues further disciplinary action will be taken

6.3 RECOMMENDED CLUB ACTION

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

If the club feels it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow their existing Safeguarding procedures having consulted with BF's Lead Safeguarding Officer.

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

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

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4. 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
5. If the club is unable to resolve the matter they should refer the case to BF's Lead Safeguarding Officer.

Sample Outcomes

1. The individual exhibiting bullying behaviour may be asked to apologise, in person or in writing
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

7. 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.

Clubs and coaches are encouraged to align their anti-bullying measures (eg codes of conduct) with the BF 'Be Safe, Have Fun and Feel Welcome' message.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION

Further help and guidance can be obtained from the following:

- KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4) 0845 1 205 204 www.kidscape.org.uk
- Bullying Online - www.bullying.co.uk
- National Bullying Helpline - <https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/>
- Anti-Bullying Alliance - <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>
- Shout - <https://giveusashout.org/get-help/issues/bullying/>

And :

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- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222 - <https://www.familylives.org.uk/>
- Youth Access 020 8772 9900 - <https://www.youthaccess.org.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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