



WELLINGTON AFC

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Statement of Intent

Wellington AFC is committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all club members and parents 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 knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer or any committee member.

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

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting (e.g. hiding football boots, shinguards, 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 focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

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. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. The impact upon a child or young person can be devastating and in some cases affect all aspects of their life. In extreme circumstances it can lead to suicide.

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

Objectives of this Policy

- All club members, coaches, officials, and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All club members, officials, and coaching staff will know what the club policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All players and parents/carers should know what the club policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Players and parents/carers should be assured that they would be supported if bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Indicators

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. 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 clothes torn or training equipment damaged
- has possessions 'go missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- gives improbable excuses to any of the above.

In more extreme cases

- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- becomes aggressive, disruptive, or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.

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

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer or a member of the club's committee or contact the County FA Child Protection Officer.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the County FA Child Protection Officer for advice and possibly to the FA Case Management System.
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate the Police will be consulted.
5. The bullying, behaviour, or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
7. If medication fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

Club Action

If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the 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/is not appropriate, a small panel (made up from the Chairman, Child Welfare Officer, secretary, committee members), should meet with the parents/carer and child alleging the bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as the true account.
3. The same three members should meet with the alleged bully and parents/carer and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their views of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed by all as a true account.
4. If bullying has in their view taken place the individual 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 the parties is appropriate at this time.

5. 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.
6. All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

In the Case of Adults Reported to be Bullying Anyone Within the Club Under 18

1. The County FA Child Protection Officer should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate.
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, the FA's Child Protection and Best Practice awareness training may be recommended. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Social Services.