

Anti-Bullying Policy:

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Bullying behaviour can be defined as repeated aggression. It can be verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion by one or more children/adults against a victim.

Bullying contains seven key features:

1. An intention to be hurtful.
2. The intention is carried out.
3. The behaviour harms the target.
4. The bully overwhelms the target with his or her power.
5. There is often no justification for the action.
6. The behaviour repeats itself again and again.
7. The bully derives a sense of satisfaction from hurting the target.

Many young people are reluctant to tell adults that they are being bullied. Older youths or children are even more reluctant. A constant need for vigilance and encouragement will be underlined in the Club to report bullying.

Forms of Bullying:

- Direct bullying - where the behaviour is obvious and bystanders are aware of it e.g. physical or verbal.
- Indirect bullying - where the behaviour is more difficult to recognize e.g. intimidation or isolation.
- Verbal bullying - including slandering, ridiculing, slagging, abusive telephone calls, name calling etc.

- Physical bullying - including pushing, shoving, assaults, damage to person's property.
- Gesture bullying - includes non-verbal gestures/glances which convey threatening or frightening messages/intent.
- E-bullying/cyber bullying - using web pages, What's App, Facebook or any other forms of social media, emails or texts, to abuse, intimidate and attack others, either directly or indirectly.
- Relational bullying - behaviour which sets out to deliberately damage another person's friendship or feelings of inclusion in a friendship group e.g. exclusion, isolation etc.
- Extortion - the deliberate extortion of money or other items of property accompanied by threats.
- Homophobic bullying - bullying that is typically aimed at young people who are gay or bi-sexual, or who are perceived to be gay or bi-sexual. It will include name-calling, isolation and violence.
- Racial bullying - can be expressed physically, socially, or psychologically when one is labelled negatively as being different from others according to one's race.
- Mobbing - This means that the target is being bullied by a group of perpetrators and not just one perpetrator.

All types and forms of bullying are unacceptable. It is important to be aware, that bullying of a child may be carried out by other children (young and old) either individually or as part of a group or by an adult/adults. Bullying is a matter for the whole Club. This means that everyone in the Club has a part to play in countering bullying. It is the responsibility of the Club, whether through the Children's Officer(s), Mentors or other Club Officers to deal with any instances of bullying.

“Children have the right to protection from all forms of violence (physical and mental). They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them”
 (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 19)

Responsibility within the Anti-Bullying Policy: It is the responsibility of all members of St Mary's GAA Athenry to help develop a caring and supportive atmosphere where any form of bullying is unacceptable. Everybody has to work together to stop bullying, the child, the parent, the Mentor, the officials of the Club. Bullying can be distinguished from bossiness and boisterous play. A bossy child will boss whoever is around. So often it is due to lack of self-control or skills of negotiation or compromise. Boisterous play can be dangerous but it does not involve young people wilfully setting out to hurt or victimise. Young people often grow out of this kind of behaviour as they grow older. What distinguishes bullying from bossiness or boisterousness is that the bully always picks on someone less powerful and more vulnerable. Persistent “slagging” which has the same devastating effects as bullying, shouldn't be ignored.

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying therefore can only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so. The following indicators are warning signs that a young player might be a victim of bullying.

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities.
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings, physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, etc).
- Stress-caused illness – headaches and stomach aches which seem unexplained.
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations.
- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven).
- Having few friends.
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed).
- Not eating.
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide.
- Anxiety.

Bullying behaviour can be prevented by:

- Ensuring that all Club members follow the Club Code of Behaviour, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.
- Dealing with any incidents as they arise.
- Using a “no blame approach” working with bullies and the group of young people helping them to understand the hurt that they are causing and so making the problem a “shared concern” of the group.
- Reinforcing that there is a “permission to tell” concept in the Club and that it is okay to tell.
- Encouraging our young players to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly different or new people.
- Offering victim immediate support and putting the “no blame approach” into operation.
- Never telling a young player to ignore bullying, they can’t ignore it, it hurts too much.
- Never encouraging a young player to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game.

Telling the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it’s not their fault.

All incidents of bullying

**PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING INVOLVING YOUNG
PEOPLE/ADULTS**

Incident should be dealt with as a breach of the Code of Behaviour as follows:

- Report the matter to the Club’s Children’s Officer.
- Confidentiality must be maintained.
- Initial assessment by the Club Children’s Officer.
- Children’s Officer collates relevant information.

- Club Children's Officer uses the acid test to determine whether this is an incident of Bullying.
- Club Children's Officer informs the alleged bully and target as to what procedures will follow.

Bullying is considered a breach of the Code of Behaviour and is dealt with as per the relevant section of the Code (see Code of Behaviour/ How to Deal with Alleged Breaches of the Code of Behaviour).

For more information please refer to Section 9 of Our Games our Code (2015) page 73:

Dealing with Bullying in your Club