

Scunthorpe Harriers Athletics Club Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

Scunthorpe Harriers Athletics Club are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in a calm and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. As a club we take bullying seriously. Members and anyone associated with the club should be assured that we do not tolerate bullying or inappropriate behaviour and that they will be supported when such behaviour is reported. If bullying is suspected or identified, all members or parents/carers should be able to inform the club. They must also know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **telling** club. This means that anyone who suspects that bullying is happening is expected to **tell** the Club Welfare Officer or any Committee Member or coach. We encourage and support all members of our club to report bullying. A member may not be aware that they are being bullied due to their age, level of special educational need/disability or vulnerability. It is the responsibility of all club members and its community to be vigilant and ensure that all members feel and are kept safe.

What Is Bullying?

There is no legal definition of bullying, but it is usually defined as repeated behaviour which is intended to hurt someone either emotionally or physically, and is often aimed at certain people because of their race, religion, gender or sexual orientation or any other aspect such as appearance, or disability. (BullyingUK 2021)

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** – being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding spikes/clothing, 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.
- **Cyber** - use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature
- **Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

During training or competing, low level disruption, offensive language, banter and horseplay will be challenged. Where this occurs clear expectations of behaviour will be set to prevent negative behaviours escalating, usually by the coaches in the first instance, and may be reported to the welfare officer. In this type of instance, an initial meeting with the member or members involved, including their parents/carers if required, may be organised to stop such antics from further escalating.

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. Club members who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

This Club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues or reports of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

All Committee Members, coaches, athletes, parents and club members should have an understanding of what bullying is.

- All Committee Members, and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All members and/or parents/carers should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Club members and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

A child or a senior member may indicate that he or she is being bullied by signs or behaviour. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a member:

- says she/he 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 athletics equipment damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for 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

If parents suspect their child is being bullied they should contact the club. Parents should be prepared to talk about the signs and symptoms that they have observed or been made aware of, and of any suspicions they have about those carrying out the bullying. Parents are requested to leave the initial investigation to the club and be respectful in their own conduct, as any attempt to resolve the issue themselves has the potential to make the matter worse. Parents should encourage their child to talk to the club's welfare officer if this is appropriate. If a parent/carer believes that a member is in immediate danger/or a crime has been committed, they should call the police/social services immediately.

If a member thinks they are being bullied, or have any concerns, they must tell an adult that they trust (parent, coach or committee member). They should explain what the concerns are, or what form the bullying is taking and how it affects them. Members who witness bullying or an incident, which they feel may be bullying, must tell a coach or committee member. In some instances, it may be more appropriate for a young child to notify their parent in the first instance - it is then requested that the parent makes contact with the club's welfare officer.

If bullying or a concern is reported to a coach or committee member, they will record the details as presented to them and pass these on to the club's welfare officer. Due to the safeguarding policy, no promise of confidentiality can be given. During the investigations, care must be promoted for the member who perceives themselves as being bullied as well as the alleged member to be bullying.

When reporting a concern, attempts should be made to do this in an appropriate location that considers the care for the member who perceives themselves as being bullied, the alleged member to be bullying and the care of the person that you are reporting to.

Recommended Club Action

If the Club identifies it is appropriate to further deal with the situation we will consider following the procedure outlined below.

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be a genuine apology solves the problem before taking further steps.
2. If this fails/not appropriate, a small panel of no fewer than 3 people (made up from Chairperson, Welfare Officer, Secretary, Committee Members) should meet with the parent and/or member alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Details are to be recorded.
3. The same 3 persons should meet with the alleged member who has instigated bullying and their parent/s when necessary and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Again details are to be recorded.
4. If after steps 1-3, that there is evidence that bullying has taken place, or other concerns

that need to be addressed, the member should be warned and put on notice of further action as per the club code of conduct. Consideration should be given as to whether now a mediation meeting between parties is appropriate and to be offered.

5. In some cases the parent of the member who has instigated bullying or bullied member 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 necessary coaches, committee members and parents/carers (where appropriate) involved with both members should then be provided with further information as appropriate to each person/s to help to positively resolve matters or to help to further monitor - records will be securely kept within the club files and kept safely under EA GDPR guidance.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying members under 18, the following actions will also be undertaken

1. UKA should always be informed and advice will be obtained upon the necessary action to be taken.
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a coach or committee member, safeguarding processes will be triggered.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the police, social services or judicial complaints procedure.

Prevention

- The Club has a written Code of Conduct, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which behaving appropriately towards each other is one requirement. This also includes guests.
- All members and members' parents/carers will accept to abide by the Code of Conduct during their membership/child's membership of the club
- The Club Welfare Officer or Chair will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.