

Bullying

Definition:

Bullying is **repeated** aggression, be it verbal, physical or psychological, by an individual or group against others, which causes significant harm to the victim(s). It is intentional, aggravating and intimidating.

Types of bullying (this list is non-exhaustive and serves only as a guide):

- Name-calling.
- Spreading harmful rumours about others.
- Exclusion from activities.
- Intentionally isolating another person from conversation or during activity.
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour.
- Taking or damaging property or belongings.
- Physical assault or causing physical harm
- Making a person do things they don't want to.
- Threatening or abusive messaging (text, social media, email).



Occurs between:

Child to child - physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, damage to property and isolation.

Adult to child - includes the repeated use of gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature or any comment intended to degrade the child.

Child to adult - includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of threatening or intimidatory nature by an individual child or group of children.

The culture of bullying

It is the responsibility of the club to deal with bullying that may take place. Each club should have anti-bullying statement that should be known to all members involved with Age-Grade Players. All coaches and volunteers in the club should implement it. Incidents must be dealt with as they arise to demonstrate that such behaviour will not be tolerated.

Bullying will continue in a culture that assumes name-calling, exclusion, teasing and other similar behaviours are acceptable, part of 'growing up or a 'man-up' approach. This is never a pleasurable experience and is especially unwelcome for young people who may not have developed the emotional maturity to put the behaviour in context or have the tools to cope with it. Young people are often embarrassed to share their concerns with others and often need adults to be their voice in such circumstance.

Strive to provide a place where:

- name calling will not be tolerated.

- no one suffers abuse of any nature.
- no one is victimised.
- each member is supported and listened to.
- all members are treated equally.
- solutions to problems are the concern of all.

Preventing bullying

Having a proactive approach can prevent bullying from occurring within the club.

- Be committed to ensure the safety and security of all players – good supervision numbers make it hard for bullying behaviour to go unnoticed.
- Encourage an awareness of what bullying is and how to avoid it. Have the anti-bullying statement visible within the club and ensure the Club Welfare Officer, coaches and other volunteers remind players and coaches of their Codes of Conduct
- Establish Codes of Conduct - Encourage young people to contribute to the rules about behaviour, and reinforce anti-bullying messages by adults leading by example in their behaviour.
- Encourage a 'permission to share' culture that allows Age-Grade Players to raise their concerns.
- Encourage a mature and measured attitude towards bullying so that Age-Grade players know how to respond effectively. Bullying should always be considered in conjunction with the Codes of Conduct. Poor practice should always be tackled early, warnings should be given and in the case of Age-Grade Players especially, there should be an opportunity to adjust their behaviour. Encourage the group to come forward with any future concerns – this will reinforce the message that bullying in whatever form is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Persistent poor practice may escalate into severe bullying if allowed to go unchecked.

Responding to bullying

- When bullying arises within a group situation use the 'no-blame' approach
- Assure the victim that nothing is wrong with them and it is not their fault.
- Talk with the person alleged to be bullying another person, explain the situation, and try to get the "bully(ies)" to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behavior by asking open questions for example;
 - Tell me what happened?
 - What were you thinking that led you to behave that way?
 - Cho has been affected by what you have done?
 - can you tell me how that person has been affected by your behavior?
 - What do you think you need to do to make things right?
- Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform parents and where necessary inform coaches or volunteers working the group.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.

For further assistance in dealing with incidents you can use the ISPCC reporting tool where necessary, <http://www.ispcc.ie/ispcc-shield-/stand-up-report-tool/12531>

More extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reportable to Statutory Authorities

Clubs who wish to achieve the highest standards for combatting bullying can set themselves the task of participating in the ISPCC 'Shield Your Club' campaign. http://www.ispcc.ie/file/424/21/1/15_0/ISPCC+IRFU+Shield+My+Club+Self-Evaluation+Tool+FEB+2015+with+cover+page.pdf

The IRFU have begun work with the ISPCC to develop a tool for all clubs. This will be an entry level standard for achieving the 'Shield' that will be useful in implementing Safeguarding standards, <http://www.irishrugby.ie/news/33933.php>.

For further information on bullying click on the presentation 'Understanding Bullying and Supporting Young People' by Ms Kellie Turtle (Childline), http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie/Participation/Code_of_Ethics/Downloads/

For clubs that are currently dealing with bullying issues the following link may provide some useful anti-bullying activities, <https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/2014/anti-bullying-activities/>