



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY FOR NORTH BELFAST HARRIERS ATHLETICS CLUB (NBH)

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all athletes (senior and junior) or 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
- Physical
- Racist
- Sexual
- Homophobic
- Verbal

Being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding spikes/clothing, threatening gestures) pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
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. Athletes (senior and junior) who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

This club have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All committee members, coaches, athletes (senior and junior), 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 athletes (senior and junior) and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.



- As a club we take bullying seriously. Athletes (senior and junior) and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

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

- Says 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- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence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

1. Report bullying incidents to the club welfare officer or a member of the committee.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to Athletics NI for advice
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, 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 mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.



Recommended 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 a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/not appropriate a small panel (Made up from chairman, Welfare Officer, Secretary, committee members) should meet with the senior or parent and junior alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same 3 persons should meet with the alleged child who has instigated bullying and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has in their view taken place the athletes (senior and junior) 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 parties is appropriate at this time.

In some cases senior or the parent of the child who has instigated bullying or bullied athletes (senior and junior) 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.

5. All coaches involved with both athletes (senior and junior) 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 athletes (senior and junior) under 18

1. Athletes NI should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a coach, child protection awareness training may be recommended.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the police, social services or judicial complaints procedure.

Prevention:

- The club will have a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part.
- All athletes (senior and junior) and parents will sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club.
- The club welfare officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with swimmers to discuss the issue openly and constructively