

Kinvara Hockey Club Anti-Bullying Guideline

1. Anti-Bullying Policy Statement

Kinvara Hockey Club recognises the importance of a positive club culture in the prevention of all forms of bullying. Our club culture and atmosphere values and welcomes difference and diversity, and inclusivity and respect are at the clubs core.

Our aim is always to provide a safe and supportive environment to all our club members where positive behaviours are encouraged and all club members are aware that any form of bullying is unacceptable. Through our Core Values we are committed to achieving an environment which maximises the potential of all our members when playing or participating in Kinvara Hockey Club. We adopt a practical, common sense, compassionate and integrated approach to addressing bullying. We are committed to implementing structures and investing in relevant training to prevent and deal with allegations of bullying. With this ethos, Kinvara Hockey Club is committed to ensuring that incidents of bullying are dealt with appropriately at all times.

Definition

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against other(s).

Bullying contains seven key features:

- An intention to be hurtful
- The intention is carried out
- The behaviour harms the target (the person or persons being bullied)
- The bully overwhelms the target with his or her power
- There is often no justification for the action
- The behaviour repeats itself again and again
- The bully derives a sense of satisfaction from hurting the target

Kinvara Hockey Club seeks to ensure that:-

- A positive club culture in preventing bullying behaviour is present at all times.
- That club structures, polices and processes are designed and implemented to create this positive club culture.
- All involved within the club are fully aware of this statement and of the anti-bullying policy and also with what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the club.
- Concerns or incidents that occur will be dealt with confidentially, with respect and in line with the club anti-bullying policy.
- We welcome feedback both positive and negative and are open to continuously improving our club.

Dealing with Bullying

The Kinvara Hockey Clubs, Codes of Conduct and Anti-Bullying Policy provide good practice guidance in relation to the prevention of bullying. If you are aware of or have a concern that bullying behaviour is happening within Kinvara Hockey Club you should report the matter to the Club Children's Officer and it will be dealt with appropriately.

Kinvara Hockey Club Children's Officer: - See contact details on club website

2. Anti-Bullying Policy

As highlighted in the Kinvara Hockey Club anti-bullying statement, the club aims to create a supportive environment where any form of bullying is unacceptable. Bullying can occur between an adult and young person, by young person to young person or adult to adult. In any of these cases it is not acceptable within Kinvara Hockey Club. Kinvara Hockey Club is aware that as with all sporting clubs and organisations, the competitive nature of hockey can create an environment that provides opportunities for bullying. The bully may be a parent who pushes too hard, a coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy, a young player who intimidates another or an official who places unfair pressure on a person.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined as 'repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others'.

Bullying can take many different forms:

- Verbal: - threatening consequences, spreading rumours, name calling, teasing, making sexual/ racist/sectarian remarks, highlighting physical appearances or sporting ability.
- Physical: - kicking, punching, hitting, spitting, biting, tripping, theft or destruction of property and kit.
- Emotional:- ignoring, excluding, getting people into trouble, leaving them out of games, talking behind their backs, writing unpleasant notes/letters/graffiti, writing letters/text messages/emails or comments on social network sites. Different people may be involved in bullying incidences. These may include coaches/ players/ mentors/ parents/spectators/bystanders.

Signs of Bullying

There are a number of signs that may indicate a person is being bullied:

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings)
- Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained

- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a training/match, going different routes, asking to be driven)
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations
- Having few friends or drop out of newer members
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed, not eating, reduced concentration, drop in performance)
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics).

This list is not exhaustive and there are other possible reasons for many of the above. The presence of one or more of these indicators is not proof that bullying is actually taking place.

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people, to the extent it effects their health and development, or at the extreme, causes them significant harm.

3. Preventing Bullying

While the emphasis within the club is to aim to provide a positive environment for all members, there may be occasions where bullying occurs. Bullying 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. Kinvara Hockey Club has a number of guidelines and principles that will endeavour to create a supportive environment for its members.

These are:-

- Ensuring that all members follow the Code of Ethics and Codes of Conducts, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member;
- Dealing with any incidents as they arise;
- Using a whole group policy or 'no-blame approach', i.e., not 'bullying the bully' but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group;
- Reinforcing that there is 'a permission to tell' culture rather than a 'might is right';
- Encouraging young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children;
- Offering the victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation;
- Never telling a young person to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it, it hurts too much
- Never encouraging a young person 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 is not their fault

4. Dealing with Bullying

Who should deal with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the statutory authorities, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all sports leaders within Kinvara Hockey Club, the Club Children's Officer and the Club Designated Liaison Person.

Dealing with Bullying:

Is it Bullying? - Four questions can be useful to ask in helping to determine whether bullying, is taking place. These are as follows:

(a) Targeting: Is the behaviour targeted at a group or individual?

(b) Duration: Has this behaviour been happening over a period of time?

(c) Frequency: How frequent is the behaviour and is there a pattern occurring?

(d) Intention: Is the intention of the behaviour to cause pain/harm/distress to an individual or group?

The 'No Blame' Approach

The Irish Sports Council recommends this approach for sporting organisations. Where appropriate this will be adopted by Kinvara Hockey Club. As stated in the code of ethics it will be handled with discretion and confidentiality, keeping the wellbeing of all parties at the centre of the process. The "no-blame" approach is explained below.

Step 1 – Interview with the victim

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling.

Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim
- Was it within his/her own peer group?
- Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation
- Actively listen

Step 2 – Meet with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable
- Make a point of calling a ‘special’ meeting
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?

Step 3 – Explain the problem

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

- Would they like it if it happened to them
- “Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what could we do to see it does not happen again?”
- Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone

Step 4 – Share the responsibility

Explain what steps/controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result

Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases “if it were you” to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them.

Step 6 – Leave it to them

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week’s time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done.

Step 7 – Meet them again

Each member of the group, including the bully, discusses how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process. Again enforce the idea of the ‘team’ looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and any changes will be made public.