



STEVENAGE FOOTBALL CLUB

Anti-Bullying Policy

#WEARESTEVENAGE



Anti-Bullying Policy

INTERNAL / EXTERNAL

Date of Last Review	1 st March 2023
Review Undertaken By	M. Pink – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Policy Overview	
Our Anti-bullying Policy sets out how we feel about bullying as a Club, what we'll do to tackle it and how we'll support children and young people who experience or display bullying behavior.	
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Scope

Football is a physical, demanding and intense sport. Success in Football depends on the high degrees of commitment, fitness and mutual trust which are essential to the maintenance of team spirit.

It follows, therefore that everyone within our Club will be treated fairly, and that any unlawful discrimination, including harassment and bullying, will not be tolerated.

Even though you are a member of a team, you can expect to be valued and respected as an individual. If you experience any form of bullying, whether physical or verbal, you must tell an adult you trust, so the matter can be dealt with as quickly as possible, in line with this policy.

All matters and concerns in relation to bullying should be addressed to either the Club Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) Academy Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and/or Welfare Officer (WO).

Definition

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person either psychologically or physically. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

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- All forms of bullying will be acted upon
- Everybody in the club or organisation has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying
- Bullying can include online as well as offline behavior
- Bullying behavior can include:
 - Physically pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc.
 - Name calling, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and humiliation or the continual ignoring of others
 - Posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social media
 - Racial, homophobic, transphobic or sexist comments, taunts or gestures
 - Sexual comments, suggestions or behavior
 - Unwanted physical contact

Context

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. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. The Club and its staff have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives

- Staff, volunteers, players and parents/carers should understand what bullying is.
- Staff and volunteers should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
- All Staff, volunteers, players and 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. Staff, volunteer, players and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- Bullying will not be tolerated
- All Club members, staff, volunteers and parents/carers should have an appreciation of the signs and indicators of bullying.

Commitment

Our Club Will:

- Recognise its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all members from harm
- Promote and implement this Anti-Bullying Policy in addition to our **Safeguarding Policy** and procedures
- Ensure that bullying behaviour is not tolerated or condoned
- Require all members of the Club to sign up this policy
- Take action to investigate and respond to any reports of bullying from children and young people
- Encourage and facilitate children and young people to play an active part in developing and adopting a code of conduct for behaviour
- Ensure that all stakeholders are given access to information, guidance and training on bullying

Each Participant, Coach, Volunteer or Official will:

- Encourage individuals to speak out about bullying behaviour
- Respect every child's need for, and right to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available
- Respect the feelings and views of others
- Recognise that everyone is important and equal, and that our differences make each of us special and worthy of being valued
- Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress
- Ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see
- Report incidents of bullying behaviour they see – by doing nothing you are condoning the behaviour

Support

Supporting Children:

- We will let children know who will listen to and support them
- We will create an "open door" ethos where children feel confident to talk to an adult about bullying behaviour or any other issue that affects them

- Potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child's disability or impairment) will be acknowledged and addressed at the outset to enable children to speak out
- We will make sure children are aware of helpline numbers
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and reports will be taken seriously
- Any reported experience of bullying behaviour will be investigated and will involve listening carefully to all those involved
- Children experiencing bullying behaviour will be supported and helped to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment
- Those who display bullying behaviour will be supported and encouraged to develop better relationships
- We will make sure that sanctions are proportionate and fair

Support to Parents/Guardians

- Parents or guardians will be advised on the club or organisation's bullying policy and practice
- Any experience of bullying behaviour will be discussed with the child's parents or guardians
- Parents will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and bully) and we'll agree on these actions together
- Information and advice on coping with bullying will be made available
- Support will be offered to parents, including information from other agencies or support lines

Prevention

- The club will have a series of resources and policies which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the **Anti-Bullying Policy** is one part. Other parts will include Player, Staff and Parent Code of Conducts, Player and Staff Handbooks and the **Safeguarding Policy** which are readily available.
- The Club's Safeguarding Officers 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. Amongst a series of workshops carried out throughout the season, bullying will be a feature topic.

Procedures

1. In the event of an incident or concern with regards to bullying please report this to Full Time Member of Club Staff who you feel most comfortable approaching, who will document that a concern or incident has been raised using a **Safeguarding Incident Report Form** and will assess the situation.
2. Should the Full Time Member of Club staff deem it necessary they will escalate the incident or concern to the Club or Academy Safeguarding Officer. Should the incident relate to the Academy then this will be reported to the Academy Welfare Officer in the first instance, who will contact you and ask you to complete a **Safeguarding Incident Report Form** if you have not already done so.
3. The Safeguarding or Welfare Officer will access the incident or concern and provide a suitable resolution which will be communicated to you in writing. Such resolutions may include reconciliation, workshops or player/parent meetings.

4. If deemed necessary the Safeguarding Officer will escalate the incident or concern to the Senior Safeguarding Manager who will assist and support in providing a suitable resolution and where necessary will take formal action which may include notifying the appropriate authorities (The EFL, The FA, LADO, The Police). You will be informed of any action taken in writing by the Safeguarding Officer, please note that in some cases we will be unable to provide full details and disclosure of the Club's actions if it is deemed to be of a confidential nature.

A summary of this procedure can be found in the **Anti-Bullying Reporting Map** which is further supported by the Club's **HR Safeguarding Structure Map**.

For further information and guidance please read the **Complaints Policy** and the **Grievance & Harassment Policy** which will be used to further support such reports of bullying.

Action

Below is an example of the actions the club can take if we think it is appropriate as a club to deal with the situation

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem
2. If this fails or is not appropriate a small panel (made up from DSO, WO and lead phase coaches) should meet with the parents/carers and child 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 three persons should meet with the alleged bully and parents/carers and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.
4. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time If bullying has taken place in the view of the panel.
5. In some cases, the parent/carers of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend workshops, 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 coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

Sanctions

1. The individual should be warned in the first instance by formal letter.
2. In the event of second incident a two week suspension or similar sanction shall be applied and communicated by formal letter.
3. Should a third incident take place the individual shall be removed from the activity on permanent basis and informed by formal letter. This action shall be require the sign off by the CEO to ensure all relevant legal and contractual obligations are followed.

The above action is applicable for the Stevenage Football Club Family which includes all players, parents, staff and volunteers. In the event that any concern relates to a member of staff cited within the reporting structure, please raise your concern directly to the Club Safeguarding Officer.

The Club will seek to conclude all action with a **Safeguarding Action Form** which will be circulated to all involved parties upon conclusion of the case.

Useful Contacts

Internal

Academy Welfare Officer – **Robyn Reardon**: robynr@stevenagefc.com

Academy Designated Safeguarding Officer – **Jorden Gibson**: jordeng@stevenagefc.com

Foundation Safeguarding Officer – **Daryl Smith**: daryls@stevenagefc.com

Club Safeguarding Officer – **James Cameron**: jamesc@stevenagefc.com

Senior Safeguarding Manager – **Mike Pink**: mikep@stevenagefc.com

External

Kick it out
info@kickitout.org

Hertfordshire FA
contactus@hertfordshirefa.com
01462 677622

Hertfordshire LADO
admin.hscb@hertfordshire.gov.uk
01992 588757

Childline
<https://www.childline.org.uk>
08001111

NSPCC Helpline
0808 800 5000

Kidscape
www.kidscape.org.uk

Anti-Bullying Alliance
www.antibullyingalliance.org