

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY for Skerries Sailing Club

While the Sailing Club recognise that bullying occurs in many aspects of life, affecting adults as well as children, and can be associated with other types of unacceptable behavior, the emphasis of this policy extends primarily to the bullying of children, and to the emotional impact on them whether they are bullied or bullying and/or the bullying of employees whether voluntary or in paid-employment. It is not specifically concerned therefore with other aspects of behavior except insofar as these relate to promoting, supporting and implementing an anti-bullying ethos.

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

Statement of Intent

Every member and employee has the right to enjoy a caring and secure environment free from any form of harassment from fellow members or from fellow employees or from significant others in authority in the club.

The committees of Skerries Sailing Club are committed to providing a caring, friendly, safe environment for all members and employees so that they can participate in the sport within a secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club and if bullying does occur, **all** members or their parents should be in a position to identify such behavior or the symptoms resulting from such behavior and alert the person responsible for implementing this policy, be assured that incidents will be dealt with promptly, effectively and in the interests of all concerned.

Permission to tell Approach

The club thus promotes the reporting by anyone who becomes aware that bullying has happened and indeed, expects its members to report such behavior as a matter of urgency, to an appropriate person in authority.

Aims of this Policy

This policy will aim to both promote an understanding of what bullying is, how its effects manifest themselves in its victims and to provide a framework and process whereby incidents of bullying can be dealt with promptly, fairly and without prejudice to any member or employee.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be broadly defined as “the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another” Thus it is any repeated verbal, psychological or physical aggression conducted by an individual or group against another individual or group

So, how does this manifest itself in reality?

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:

- Social/Emotional; being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding clothing, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Intimidation ; playing dirty tricks, defacing/damaging property, physical gestures or stances
- Damaging property or possessions or hiding or taking belongings
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, teasing, insulting negative comments
- Inappropriate use of mobile phones

Symptoms of a person being bullied.

- Irrational and sudden expressions of fear or irrational changes in attitude towards a previously enjoyable pursuit
- Making of excuses to avoid being in the company of the bully e.g. develop headaches/stomach aches or other excuses to avoid participation.
- Withdrawn behavior or unexplained mood changes
- Comes home with clothes or equipment damaged or “missing”
- Asks for money for improbable reasons or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)

More Extreme Symptoms

- Sudden stammering in particular when approaching a time when re-engagement with the problem is imminent
- Becoming distressed, stopping eating, bedwetting.
- Displaying visible signs of high anxiety & unwilling to talk about what is wrong
- Crying at night and/or nightmares
- Suddenly starts bullying other children or siblings

Note; these signs and behaviors may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

Procedures

Incidents reported and involving one or more child bullying one or more children.

In most case such incidents will either be reported by a child to his/her parent/guardian or will be noticed by a trainer/coach.

If the bullying is reported by a parent to the Club, the parents of the perpetrator should be notified immediately and offered the opportunity to discuss the issue with either trainer/coach or committee member responsible for the implementation of the policy.

The parents/guardian of the perpetrator should be 1st offered an opportunity to get the bully to see the situation from the victim's point of view.

The trainer/coach should advise the committee to which he/she reports and remain aware of the situation and monitor progress or regression.

Should the parent/guardian decline the opportunity or deny the allegation, the Club should immediately setup a small sub-committee (comprising some of ; Child Liaison officer, Junior Convener, Secretary, committee members) and provide an opportunity for both parties to separately present their point of view, interview any witnesses, attempt to ascertain the facts. The Club will then arrange follow-up meetings with both parties to present probable cause and effect and advice on ensuring any bullying stops.

If the incident is not resolved at relevant committee level, the problem will be escalated up to senior committee level to which a written report should be submitted by both parties to the bullying incident and a report from the sub-committee which initially investigated the matter.

The parents of both parties will have the right to be present at any subsequent investigative procedures by the main committee.

Incidents reported and involving one or more child being bullied by one or more adults

In most case such incidents will be reported by a child to his/her parent/guardian.

The bullying incident should be reported to a member of the junior committee responsible for the area wherein the alleged perpetrator is operating. The person reporting the incident should be asked to prepare a brief written statement concerning the details of the incident(s).

The person who is in receipt of such report must present the matter to both Child Liaison Officer (see Fixtures list for current office holder) and Junior Convener.

Both Child Liaison Officer and junior convener will decide on the relevant course of action i.e.

- (a) A quiet word with the alleged perpetrator to make them aware of the situation and the distress their action has caused to the child.
- (b) Establishment of a small panel comprising some or all of; Child Liaison Officer, Junior Convener, Secretary and/or other members of the committee. A discussion with both parents and alleged perpetrator with the aim of identifying potential problems and agreeing an avenue for conciliation and ending the issue.
- (c) For very serious allegations involving possible breaches of the law, the Child Welfare Officer and Junior Convener should make the Commodore aware of the situation immediately and a decision on whether to take the matter to external authorities (Gardai) should be made expeditiously

Actions to be taken following findings of bullying Incidents by Members

The primary recourse for minor incidents will be to offer reconciliation and perhaps an offer of a genuine apology to solve the problem.

Failing the above and for more serious allegations, the Constitution of Skerries Sailing Club Sections 14 & 15 will apply in cases that are within the remit of the Club to rule upon.

For serious incidents involving possible breaches of criminal law, the matter will be handed over to the civil authorities in addition to sanctions carried out under the Sailing Club constitution.

END.