



Dunboyne Tennis Club

Old Kilbride Road, Clonee, Co. Meath. Tel: 085 153 7466

Child Safeguarding Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures

Dunboyne Tennis Club is aware of the potential for bullying behaviour taking place within sports clubs. This document defines bullying and sets out the Club's anti-bullying policy, the supports to be put in place for victims of bullying and those involved in bullying, and the procedures to be followed if incidents occur.

Dunboyne Tennis Club will not accept or condone bullying behaviour and encourages all members to report such instances which will be dealt promptly and in a supportive, sensitive and confidential manner. While the more extreme forms of bullying i.e. physical or emotional abuse will be reported to An Garda Síochána and/or other statutory authorities as appropriate, dealing with bullying behaviour amongst young people in the club will, in the first instance, be the responsibility of the Club's Children's Officers.

Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved

Defining Bullying

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

It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children and young people.

It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion against a victim.

Types of Bullying

It is important to note that bullying involving children/young people can occur in a number of contexts:

Child-to-child

- includes physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, damage to property and isolation;

Adult-to-Child

- includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature, or any comment intended to degrade the child; and,

Child-to-adult

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



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Bullying - The Warning Signs

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore 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.

The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied.

- Reluctance to come to a Club/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 scout meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven)
- Frequent loss of ‘subs’ or shortage of money with vague explanations
- Having few friends
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed)
- Not eating
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics)

Support for Children and Young People

In supporting children and young members, Dunboyne Tennis Club will ensure that they:

- Are aware of who in the Club will listen to and support them
- Be given advice and assistance by an appropriately trained and experienced person
- Are informed of what facts are being recorded, in what context and why
- Will be listened to carefully and supported, irrespective of whether they are being bullied or the child identified as bullying
- *Where bullied* - are supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development
- *Where bullying* - will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying



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In line with safeguarding guidelines, sanctions involving long periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, will be avoided.

Support for Parents/Guardians and Carers

In supporting parents/guardians and carers, the Club will:

- Advise Parents/Guardians and Carers on local policy and practice about bullying
- Discuss any incident of bullying with the child's parent(s)/guardians, or carers
- Seek Parental/Guardian/Carer advice on agreement as to what action should be taken
- Be provided with information and advice on coping with bullying
- Offer support to parents/guardians/carers Support including information on relevant agencies and support channels.

Preventing Bullying

In preventing bullying behaviour, Dunboyne Tennis Club will:

- Raise awareness among members of the potential for such behaviour.
- Ensure policy for dealing with such behaviour is enforced and underpinned by clearly established procedures for dealing with any incidents.
- Where appropriate, follow established safeguarding guidelines in employing the whole of group or "no-blame" approach recognised as being effective in tackling bullying behaviour. Under this approach, this means not 'bullying the bully' but rather working with bullies and the group of young people involved in helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group.

Countering Bullying - Practical Steps

In countering bullying, Dunboyne Tennis Club will:

- Use young people as a positive resource in countering bullying and to change the culture of the group to a "permission to tell" culture rather than a 'might is right' one;
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children;
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation;
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it, it hurts too much;
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game; and,
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault



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Countering Bullying Behaviour The 'No Blame' Approach

The “no blame” approach acknowledges the advantage of group discussion over punishment in that the problem is not driven underground or escalated by making the bully more excluded or more of a social failure.

The approach involves seven distinct steps as follows:

Step 1 – Interview with the victim

If there has been an incident of bullying, then one of the Club’s Children’s Officers will first talk to the victim. At this stage, the Officer will try to establish who was involved and what the victim is now feeling by asking questions such as:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim?
- Was it within his/her own peer group?

The Officer will assure the victim that his/her name will not be revealed in the investigation.

Step 2 – Meet with all involved

The Children’s Officer will arrange to meet with all those involved. This should include bystanders, those who may have colluded, those joined in and those who initiated the bullying. The group should be restricted to a maximum of six to eight in order to keep the number controllable.

Under Step 2, the Children’s Officer should:

- 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?



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Step 3 – Explain the problem

Under Step 3, the Children's Officer will explain the distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident. However, at this stage, the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame will not be discussed. The feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, being laughed at, will be explained. The following questions could then be asked:

- 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?"

The Children's Officer will use the meeting to identify the basis for the bullying incident but without isolating anyone or trying to identify a solution.

Step 4 – Share the responsibility

The Children's Officers will explain what steps/controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will loose out as a result.

Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas

At this stage, the Children's Officer will encourage the group to suggest ways that would make the victim happier. All positive responses will be listened to and noted.

Step 6 – Leave it to them

Now that the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. A further meeting of the group will be arranged in a week's time. The responsibility will be handed over to the group with an associated timeframe within which something must be done.

Step 7 – Meet them again

At the second meeting, each member of the group, including the bully, will discuss how things are going, who is doing what and whether there have been other incidents. This will allow for continual monitoring, while keeping everyone involved in the process.

Again, the Children's Officer will reinforce 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 by the Club.