



## **Hove Rugby Club – Anti-Bullying Policy**

Hove RFC acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person<sup>1</sup> entrusted to its care. The club is committed to working to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for every child or young person who plays or participates in rugby.

We understand that it is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club to safeguard children by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm, neglect or **bullying**. Hove RFC has drawn up its Anti-Bullying Policy as a means of ensuring that bullying is identified within, and eliminated from, the Club. (The Club has also adopted a Child Protection Policy (CPP), and this Anti-Bullying Policy is a supplement to the overall CPP.)

### **Key Principles of Hove RFC's Anti-Bullying Policy:**

- Bullying of any kind is not acceptable, and will not be tolerated, within Hove RFC;
- The Club endorses and has adopted the RFU/RFUW 'telling' culture, and anyone who knows that bullying is happening is **obliged** to tell the Club's Safeguarding Officer (CSO)/Child Protection Officer (CPO);
- Bullying will be taken seriously, responded to promptly, and procedures followed to deal with the situation; and,
- It is the responsibility of every adult working at the club - whether professional or voluntary - to ensure that all young people can enjoy the sport in a safe and enjoyable environment.

### **Policy Objectives**

- All Club members, coaches, volunteers and parents should have an understanding of what constitutes bullying;
- All Club members, coaches and volunteers should know what the RFU/RFUW/Club/Constituent Body (CB) policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported;
- All players and parents should know what the RFU/RFUW/Club/CB policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises;
- Players and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported; and,
- Bullying will not be tolerated and must be eradicated.

### **Bullying?**

#### **A Definition**

Bullying is "the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person", and results in pain and distress to the victim. In addition to Young People bullying each other, adults are capable of bullying Young People and every adult working at the club has a responsibility to ensure that bullying by adults is identified and reported to the Club's CSO/CPO just as surely as it is reported for bullying of one Young Person by another or others.

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<sup>1</sup> A child is defined as a person under the age of 18 (The Children Act 1989). However, within RFU Regulations a male player is permitted to play in the adult game when he reaches his 17th birthday. In these circumstances, paragraph 2.1(f) cannot practically be applied. However, those responsible for the management of adult teams which include 17 year olds must at all times be mindful of their safety and wellbeing.



Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, exclusion (emotional and physical), tormenting (e.g. hiding rugby kit, threatening gestures including sending threatening text messages);
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- Homophobic - because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality; and,
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

### **Signs and symptoms**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied.

Children and Young People have described bullying as:

- Being called names;
- Being teased;
- Being hit, pushed, pulled, pinched, or kicked;
- Having their bag, mobile or other possessions taken;
- Receiving abusive text messages;
- Being forced to hand over money;
- Being forced to do things they do not want to do;
- Being ignored or left out; or,
- Being attacked because of religion, gender, sexuality, disability, appearance or ethnic or racial origin.

### **Other signs and symptoms**

A child or young person:

- Does not want to attend training or club activities;
- Changes their usual routine;
- Begins being disruptive during sessions;
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- Has possessions going missing;
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- Starts stammering;
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- Is bullying other children;
- Stops eating; or,
- Is frightened to say what's wrong.

These signs and behaviours may not necessarily constitute bullying and may be symptoms of other problems. However, Club/CB members, coaches and volunteers need to be aware of these possible signs and report any concerns to the Club CSO/CPO, or CB Welfare Manager.



## Implementing RFU Anti-Bullying Policy

Hove RFC is committed to implementing the RFU Anti-Bullying Policy, and has adopted the following procedure to effect this implementation.

### Phase 1: Raise Awareness

- Raise awareness with all members and players within the Club;
- Put posters on the notice board;
- Ensure all young players know they can talk to someone if they are worried;
- Ensure that parents have a copy of the policy;
- Adopt the policy within the club constitution;
- Ensure that the Code of Conduct clearly states that behaviour which constitutes bullying will not be accepted;
- Ensure all coaches, staff and volunteers have signed up the Code of Conduct;
- Ensure the policy is given to members and players;
- Set up a working party to support the ongoing development and implementation of the policy; and,
- Identify any training needs within the club and contact the RFU to find out about workshops and opportunities for support

### Phase 2: Review, Monitor and Evaluate

- Ensure that the working group meets to review any incidents, how they were managed and outcomes reached.
- Take lessons learnt from incidents and re-evaluate the policy as required.
- Maintain an ongoing poster campaign.
- Ensure members, players, coaches, volunteers and parents are kept up-to-date with any changes.
- Invite feedback from players, parents, coaches, members and volunteers about the policy and its impact.

## Procedures and Management of Bullying

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club CSO/CPO, and record these incidents (using the RFU Incident Record Form). If the incident is an adult bullying a Young Person, the Club CSO/CPO will report the incident to the RFU Child Protection Officer. If the incident is a Young Person bullying a Young Person, the club/county will manage this, and can access advice and support from the Club CSO/CPO, CB Welfare Manager or RFU Child Protection Officer at any stage of the process.
2. Parents may be informed and asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.
3. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
4. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue, the Club/CB/RFU can initiate disciplinary action under the relevant constitution.



## Action if bullying is suspected

### Action to help the victim:

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously;
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns. Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority;
- Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately;
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when); and,
- Report any concerns to the Child Protection Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

### Action towards the bully(ies):

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s);
- Inform the bully(ies)'s parents;
- Inform appropriate organisation members of action taken;
- The CPO should keep a written record of action taken;

### Important notes on making reports of abuse:

Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay. Describe any visible bruising or other injuries. Provide details of witnesses to the incidents. Include the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred, if applicable. Ascertain whether the parents have been contacted. If so, what has been said? Ascertain whether anyone else has been consulted? If so, record details. If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said? Has anything been alleged to be the abuser? Keep questions to a minimum, though, as bullying cases may be dismissed if a child has been led, or words and ideas have been suggested. Record the details.

Where possible referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

### Information for social services or the police about suspected abuse:

To ensure that this information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern, which should include the following information: child's name, age and date of birth; home address and telephone number. Also indicate whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else. Explain the nature of the allegation, and include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.

### Concerns outside the immediate sporting environment (e.g. a parent or carer):

- Report your concerns to the Child Protection Officer, who should contact social services or the police as soon as possible.
- If the Child Protection Officer is not available, the person being told of or discovering the abuse should contact social services or the police immediately.
- The Child Protection Officer should also report the incident to the Disciplinary Committee and should ascertain with the CPO on appropriate action to be taken.



### Declaration

On behalf of Hove RFC we, the undersigned, will oversee the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy and take all necessary steps to ensure it is adhered to.

Signed:

(NB: One of the signatories should be the Hove RFC Child Protection Officer)

**Name:**

**Name:**

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**Position within Hove RFC:**

**Position within Hove RFC**

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**Date:**

**Date:**

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