

Actonians Ladies & Girls Football Club Anti-Bullying Policy

November 2019



www.actonianslfc.com

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Statement of Intent

Actonians LFC are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all club members or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **TELLING** club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer or any committee member. We are committed to playing our part to teach players to treat each other with **RESPECT**.

Objectives of this Policy

- All club members, coaches, officials and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All club members, official and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All players and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Players and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will **NOT** be tolerated.

Our Commitment

Actonians LFC commits to ensure our websites and social networking sites are being used appropriately and any online bullying will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with the procedures detailed in this policy.

What is Bullying?

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:

- **Emotional** – being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)
- **Physical** – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Sexual** – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Discrimination** – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, homophobic comments, jokes about disabled people, sexist comments
- **Verbal** – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyberbullying** - This is when a person uses technology, i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger, tweets), to deliberately upset someone. Bullies often feel anonymous and 'distanced' from the incident when it takes place online and 'bystanders' can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding the information on. There is a growing trend for bullying to occur online or via texts – bullies no longer reply on being physically near to the young person.

- **Trolling** - This is the name given to the posting deliberately offensive comments on people's social media pages aimed at causing upset and distress. This type of behaviour could result in legal action.

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.

Actonians LFC has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Signs and Indicators

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs that they should investigate if a child:

- Says he or she is being bullied
- Is unwilling to go to club sessions
- Becomes withdrawn anxious or lacking in confidence
- Feels ill before training sessions
- Comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damages
- Has possessions go 'missing'
- Asks for money or steals money (to pay the bully)
- Has unexpected cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbably excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases:

- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Bullying as a result of any form of discrimination

Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability.

Generally, these forms of bullying look like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include:

- **Verbal abuse** – derogatory remarks about girls or women, suggesting girls are inferior to boys and men, or that black, Asian and ethnic minority people are not as capable as white people; spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that someone is inferior and so they are 'gay'; ridiculing someone because of a disability or mental health related issue, or

because they have a physical, mental or emotional developmental delay. Referring to someone by the colour of their skin, rather than their name; using nicknames that have racial connotations; isolation someone because they come from another country or social background etc.

- **Physical abuse** – including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault, and threatening behaviour.
- **Cyberbullying** – using online spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. It can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging.

Discrimination is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can potentially lead to actions that may cause women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, LGBT+ people, or people who follow specific religions or beliefs to, to be excluded, isolated or undervalued. Discriminatory language and behaviour will not be tolerated at Actonians LFC.

If a discrimination incident occurs, members will be informed that discriminatory language is offensive and will not be tolerated. If a member continues to make discriminatory remarks, it will be explained in detail the effects that discriminatory and bullying has on people. If it is a young person making the remarks their parents/carer will be informed just as in any breach of Actonians LFC Code of Conduct and this Anti-Bullying policy.

If a member makes persistent remarks, they will be removed from the training setting in line with managing challenging behaviour and the Club Welfare Officer or club officials will describe in more detail about why their comments are unacceptable.

If the problem persists, the member will be made to understand the sanctions that will apply if they continue to use discriminatory language or behaviour.

Members procedure

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer or any member of the Actonians LFC committee.
2. In cases of serious bullying, Actonians LFC will refer the incident to the County FA Welfare Officer for advice and possibly also the FA Case Management Team.
3. Parents/carers will be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate the Police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made by the club to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour
7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

Recommended Club Action

If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation the procedure outlined below will be followed:

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 the Chairman, Club Welfare Officer, Secretary, committee members) will meet with the parent and child alleging the bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes will be taken for clarity, which will be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same small panel will then meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view on the allegation. Minutes will again be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has in their view taken place the individual should be warned and out on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration will be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
5. In some cases the parent of the bully or bullied player will be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so and if appropriate. The club committee will monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
6. All coaches involved with both individuals will be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone under 18

1. The County Welfare Officer will always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate, this may include action by the FA Safeguarding team.
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, The FA Safeguarding Children Education program may be recommended.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Social Care.

Prevention

- Actonians LFC has a written constitution which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying is one part. The constitution can be found on the club website – www.actonianslfc.com
- All Actonians LFC club members and parents will be advised to read and accept the constitution upon joining the club each season.
- The Club Welfare Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, the Club will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly.

Useful Club & FA Contacts

Actonians LFC Welfare Officer:

Carley Lloyd

welfare@actonianslfc.com •

Middlesex County Designated Safeguarding Officer:

Sharon Porter

Sharon.porter@middlesexfa.com

0208 515 1919

The FA safeguarding team:

Email safeguarding@TheFA.com

Telephone 0800 169 1863 and asking for The FA's safeguarding team.

This policy is based on guidance provided to schools by KIDSCAPE. KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying. KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300 or you can access their website via www.kidscape.org.uk

You may also wish to access any of the following websites designed to give advice and guidance to parents and children who are faced with dealing with bullying:

Guidance for parents/carers

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/

www.stonewall.org.uk

www.bullying.co.uk

Guidance for young people

www.youngstonewall.org.uk/

www.childline.org.uk

We would like to thank the ASA who have shared their Anti Bullying Policy for Clubs and to Stonewall's guidance from which this recommended FA Club Anti Bullying Policy has been developed.