



GREAT BRITAIN DEAF FOOTBALL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

VERSION 0.1 – FEBRUARY 2025

Statement of Intent

We, at GBDF, are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our staff and players, to support the participation in football in a relaxed and secure environment.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at GBDF. If bullying does occur, all members of staff, players and parent/carers should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

If anyone knows that bullying is happening, they are expected to inform the designated safeguarding officer/welfare officer or any committee/board members.

This organisation is committed to playing its part in keeping football safe.

Objectives of this Policy

- All members of GBDF and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All members of GBDF and parents should know what the policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- As a team, we take bullying seriously. All members and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the intended 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.
- **Verbal abuse** – derogatory remarks about girls or women, suggesting girls and women 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 something or someone is inferior and so they are “gay” – for example, “you’re such a gay boy!” or “those trainers are so 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; isolating someone because they come from another country or social background etc.

- **Sexual** unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- **Discrimination** 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 rely on being physically near to the young person.

Trolling

This is the name given to 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.

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.

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, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, or people who follow specific religions or beliefs, to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued. Ensure that club members know that discriminatory language and behaviour will not be tolerated in this club.

Signs and Indicators

An individual may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. All members of staff should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if an individual:

- says they are being bullied.
- Becomes unwilling to participate in camp/training/matches or other activities including social.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence.
- Feels ill before training or social activities.
- Has possessions go "missing" or damaged.
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Becomes frightened to say what's wrong.
- Give improbable excuses for any of the above.

In more extreme cases:

- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Has changes in sleep routine or appetite.
- Mental health issues arise.

Procedures

1. Report Bullying to Designated Safeguarding Officer / Welfare Officer. Report to the board/committee if involves Designated Safeguarding Officer/Welfare Officer.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred UK Deaf Sport (UKDS) for advice.
3. **Where appropriate** parents/carers should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. **A meeting arranged with appropriate people to discuss incidents and a way forward.** An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue GBDF will initiate disciplinary action.
7. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.

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

1. The designated safeguarding officer/welfare officer should always be informed and will advise on an action taken where appropriate in line with the safeguarding policy.
2. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Social Care.

Prevention:

- GBDF will have a written constitution (player and staff code of conduct), which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part.
- All members (players and staff) and parents (on behalf of those under 18) will sign to accept the code of conduct upon joining the team.
- The designated safeguarding officer/welfare officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the team, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

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