



Anti-Bullying Policy

Version	Date	Author	Changes
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Committee Approval:



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Waterford Boat Club (WBC) and Rowing Ireland believe that the primary role of the sport is to provide individuals with the ability to develop to their full rowing potential. Essential to this is the provision of a safe learning environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying can result in psychological damage to those involved. It is anti-social behaviour, which is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in the sport of rowing. If Bullying does occur, this policy should outline the procedures for dealing with the situation. This policy applies to all within WBC and Rowing Ireland.

BULLYING BEHAVIOUR WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!

The aims of this policy are:

- *To create an ethos in which attending a rowing session is a positive experience for all members of the rowing community.*
- *To make clear that all forms of Bullying are unacceptable in sports.*
- *To enable everyone to feel safe while rowing and encourage reporting of any bullying.*
- *To support and protect anyone who has been bullied and ensure they are listened to.*
- *To help those who have displayed bullying behaviour to change their ways and to understand why change is needed.*
- *To inform coaches, parents, and others relevant to the rowing community.*
- *To ensure all members of the rowing community feel responsible for combating Bullying.*

Definition of Bullying

'The repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights or needs of another or others'.

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour, whether physical or psychological and usually has the following four features:

- *It is repetitive and persistent- though sometimes a single incident can have the same impact over time as part of a continuous pattern. E g Racist Bullying.*
- *It is intentionally harmful- though occasionally not consciously intended by the bully or bystanders.*
- *It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent or stop it.*
- *It causes distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence.*



Common characteristics include

- *Motivation to demonstrate power by creating fear and to gain 'respect' by peers.*
- *Often, people who bully have themselves been bullied in the past. They may feel powerless and compensate by trying to intimidate others.*
- *Bullying can be obvious, subtle, hidden, and difficult to prove.*

Males often use physical Bullying and threats, but exclusion from groups is more common amongst females.

- *Bullying can be by one person, one-on-one, by group against one or group on group.*
- *Bystanders often show acceptance or approval, and those on the receiving end can see them as part of the problem.*
- *Bullying in sport can be related to tensions in schools, groups, families and local communities.*

Types of Bullying

- *Emotional - Unfriendly, exclusion, torment (e.g. hiding belongings, threats, rumours)*
- *Physical - Pushing, kicking, hitting, or any violence*
- *Racist - Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures*
- *Sexual - Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments*
- *Verbal - Calling names, sarcasm, rumours*
- *Homophobic - Because of, or focussing on, sexuality*
- *Cyberbullying - All types of internet and email misuse, threats by text, calls by mobile phone and other devices, misuse of technology e.g. camera and video.*
- *Exclusion – less obvious. A person appears to be included but regularly excluded from group activity. Or given wrong information about an activity, eg times of activity.*
- *Extortion – regularly extracting something from someone without returning the “favour” eg borrowing money, snacks, drinks etc*
- *Gesture – a look, a signal, pulling a face, imitating the way someone walks, stands etc*

Behaviour

We need to learn that one person's teasing may, to another, be unkind and even cruel. The way behaviour is received is important rather than what was intended.

A person can be Bullying and subject to Bullying, at the same time. Although some are vulnerable due to physical or social character, anyone can be bullied for any reason or for no reason. Individuals may resort to Bullying for a range of reasons. WBC and Rowing Ireland will support those who are subjected to Bullying, and work to restore relationships between all involved through restorative practice techniques.



The coaching/volunteer team – whether paid or voluntary - must be aware of how their actions are perceived and take care not to be accused of Bullying. Such actions may include

- :

- *Teasing about characteristics one has little or no control of.*
- *Inappropriate bad temper*
- *Ridiculing the actions of one in front of others*
- *Inconsistency in application of punishment or reward*
- *Physical intimidation*
- *Insults or swearing*
- *Belittling others on the coaching/volunteer team*
- *Non-constructive or unnecessarily personal criticism*

People involved

There may be several people involved in incidents of bullying behaviour, directly or indirectly having seen or heard about what is happening and these may be adults and/or young people.

There are four typical types:

1. The person displaying bullying behaviour can be an individual or a group, this may be an individual who is popular, or has discovered their behaviour evokes a reaction. Where a group is involved, they can be those most respected or thought to be part of a good team. People who behave in a bullying manner may be recognised by their own behaviours, often where:

- *An individual is being intentionally hostile, aggressive, seemingly be without reason*
- *An individual or group exert power over another individual or group, often where an imbalance of power already exists*
- *Satisfaction is gained from their bullying behaviour*
- *An individual purposely causes harm to another*
- *An individual repeats harmful behaviour to another*

2. The person or group on the receiving end of the bullying behaviour can be known as the target. Often these are individuals who are different from others or stand out for a reason e.g. different culture, background, sexual orientation; someone with a disability, or a talented or less skilled individual.

3. Those individuals who are onlookers to bullying behaviour, often taking no part, are known as the backup and the audience. They provide the audience and the reaction to the bullying behaviour and may be afraid to speak up if they become a target.

4. An individual or group usually knows what is happening but considers it not their problem; they don't get involved as they are not affected but don't do anything to stop the behaviour.



Where bullying behaviour involves an adult:

The person in charge should ask to speak with the adult separately, away from any young people or other adults. The person in charge should describe the type of behaviour witnessed and its effect on others, especially young people, highlighting the codes of conduct and the Anti-Bullying policy as reminders about acceptable behaviour. The adult should be asked to stop such behaviour; if the behaviour is denied or does not change, the person in charge may need to issue an immediate sanction to protect young people or others.

Where bullying behaviour involves young people only:

The person in charge should talk with all the people involved in bullying behaviour as soon as they become aware of the issue and try to reach an agreement about what happened between those involved, highlighting the codes of conduct and the Anti-Bullying Promise as reminders about acceptable behaviour. An immediate sanction may be necessary to deal with the bullying behaviour.

Signs & Symptoms of someone being bullied

Initial impacts of Bullying often go unnoticed but may be apparent in mood changes and attitudes. Those bullied often develop insecurity and anxiety. This can cause vulnerability, low self-confidence and self-esteem. Reluctance to discuss problems through fear of consequences is common, and the coaching/volunteering team should be alert to this. These may indicate that a person is being bullied:

- *Anxiety about travel to and from sessions or changes to arrangements.*
- *Unwillingness or refusal to attend or participate, unexplained absence*
- *Deteriorating performance, poor concentration or enthusiasm*
- *Patterns of illness*
- *Unexplained mood or behavioural change, especially after absences*
- *Visible anxiety or stress: stammers, withdrawing from activities, etc.*
- *Spontaneous out-of-character comments about others*
- *Stealing or increasing requests for money*
- *Unexplained bruising, cuts, or clothing damage*
- *Reluctance to discuss distress*

Impact of bullying behaviour

Bullying behaviour has an impact on everyone involved. For the person who is the target of bullying behaviour, the effects can be felt psychologically and physiologically.

The person who is responsible for the bullying behaviour, whilst often a popular person amongst their peers, may also show signs of low self-esteem, show a lack of empathy and may have been labelled as a 'troublemaker' in the past. If the person who is behaving in a bullying manner is an adult, other young people may be afraid to speak out because of the consequences, i.e. they may be afraid of not being picked for activities or left out of team selections.



Roles & Responsibilities within WBC and Rowing Ireland:

Anyone who is a target of bullies should not suffer in silence but try to speak out to end suffering by themselves and maybe others.

Everyone involved in rowing should work together to combat and, hopefully, to reduce and put an end to Bullying.

Coaches will - :

- *Foster in rowers self-esteem, self-respect, and respect for others*
- *Show by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect from all our participants*
- *Discuss Bullying with our rowers so that each one learns about the damage to the bullied and the bully, and discuss the importance of reporting any bullying when it happens*
- *Be alert to signs of distress and other indications of Bullying*
- *Listen to those who have been bullied, take them seriously and act to support & protect them.*
- *Report suspected Bullying to the appropriate person on the organisation.*
- *Follow up on any complaint from an individual or friend about Bullying, and report back promptly on any actions taken*
- *Deal with observed Bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures*

Rowers will –

- *Avoid getting involved in any kind of Bullying, even if it makes you unpopular*
- *Step in to protect anyone from being bullied, unless it is unsafe for you.*
- *Report to the person in charge or their assistant any bullying seen or suspected to avoid secrecy and to help stop further instances*

Parents/Carers, Volunteers, and Assistants will - :

- *Watch for distress or unusual behaviour, which might indicate Bullying*
- *Advise their rowers to report any bullying to the person in charge and explain the dangers of the spread of Bullying to themselves and others*
- *Advise their rowers not to react violently to any form of Bullying*
- *Be supportive of their rowers, reassuring them that suitable action will be taken*
- *Keep a written note of any reported bullying*
- *Inform the organisation of any bullying, even if it is other rowers who are involved*
- *Cooperate with the rowing community. If your rowers are accused of Bullying, try to get the truth, and explain the implications of Bullying, both for the bullied and the bullies.*



Parents and the Club Children's Officer should be informed of the issue by the person in charge and how it was dealt with, including any necessary action if the behaviour continues. It is better to sort issues immediately and quickly; we expect parents and adults to support this process. The person in charge should also observe the group/individuals to ensure the bullying behaviour does not continue.

The person in charge may also submit a disciplinary report to the WBC Childrens Officer.

Prevent Bullying from taking place:

- Through preparation and publication of bullying guidance – hopefully awareness of Bullying will increase and ensure implementation of the procedures to deal with any bullying incidents and reports.

Through meetings of the whole club/organisation with announcement of a zero tolerance policy towards Bullying, and to dispel the idea that bystanders are innocent when Bullying occurs.

- Through the club's Code of Conduct policies for use of mobile phones, to include the reporting of inappropriate use to the relevant authorities.
- By discussion of procedures with beginners as part of their induction process.
- Through use of senior rowers as mentors with beginners.
- By having the captain or CCO available to all rowers as a first point of contact for reporting bullying.
- **By the nature of rowing, rowers learn social skills of negotiation, arbitration and intervention, and learning to consider issues of difference and diversity.**
- **Rowers learn cooperation, teamwork, and discipline and understand that bullying and bullying behaviours are detrimental to the success of any crew, and will not be tolerated.**

WBC Approach to Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

WBC and Rowing Ireland's aim in the processes below is to support the person suffering the bullying behaviour, and to focus on changing the behaviour of those displaying bullying behaviour.

- *Coaches take their duty of care seriously and will be vigilant and take immediate action. If coaches and volunteers observe or become aware of an alleged bullying incident they should record details, and pass these to the Children's Officer.*
- *The Children's Officer will investigate carefully and considerately by interviewing all those concerned. The information provided will be recorded.*
- *Following investigation the Children's Officer will decide on an appropriate means to best support all individuals involved. The action taken will be recorded.*



- *All bullying records will be attached to records for the rower, and coaches will be kept informed as appropriate and necessary.*
- *A date for review of the situation will be set with all those involved.*

Where bullying behaviour involves an adult

The behaviour of an adult may be dealt with through an informal complaints process. Children affected and their parents can contact the Children's Officer. The Club Children's Officer role is to support the young person in ensuring the matter is dealt with appropriately. An informal process is preferable to the formal process, where a resolution can be reached to the benefit of any young person involved. Formal processes are detailed in the WBC Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures.

Where bullying behaviour involves young people only:

If an issue has not been resolved or continues after an attempt to resolve the behaviour at the time, or a report is received after an event, the information should be passed to the Children's Officer (CCO).

Often it will require a coach or other person in charge, e.g. a team manager and the CCO to work together to resolve an issue. The CCO will need to know who is involved i.e. the person or group who have allegedly behaved in a bullying manner, the target of the behaviour and any others who may have been present at the time, i.e. the bystanders.

The bullying behaviour should be assessed based on:

- *Information from the target of the behaviour (individual or group)*
- *How long the bullying behaviour has been going on*
- *How often the bullying behaviour is happening*
- *Is there an intention to cause harm to the target(s) of the bullying behaviour?*

How an alleged bullying incident should be handled

Three steps to deal with incidents of Bullying are:

1. To interview the person who has allegedly been bullied and the person who has allegedly displayed bullying behaviour – separately.
2. To provide support for those individuals
3. To monitor and review the situation.

When a bullying incident is reported, remember:

- *Each case will be different, and the solution must be tailored to suit the problem;*
- *To remain impartial – do not seek to attribute blame;*
- *To help all individuals involved to gain insight into their behaviour;*
- *That both behaviours have been 'learned' from life experience, so with the support they can be challenged and changed to acceptable behaviours*



Step 1 – Interviewing the individuals involved

The person alleged to have been bullied:

- a. Listen to the victim's story in a calm, non-judgemental way
- b. Indicate from the start that the incident is being taken seriously
- c. Inform Designated Safeguarding/Children's Officer
- d. Allow the victim to explore their feelings about the incident
- e. Do not attempt to discover all facts as this may increase stress
- f. Discuss and agree on how they might be supported. Involve them in achieving a constructive solution
- g. Agree on acceptable targets for reaching the solution
- h. Agree on a review date
- i. Monitor the situation with coaching/volunteering team in an unobtrusive way

The person who allegedly displayed the bullying behaviour

- a. Interview the person along with any bystanders
- b. Do not disclose information sources – respect confidentiality
- c. State that all incidents of inappropriate behaviour are taken seriously
- d. Clarify that the group has a problem and they need a constructive solution
- e. Facilitate them working to set agreed targets for the group
- f. Make the group aware that progress will be monitored and appropriate action taken

Step 2 - Provide support for the individuals involved

The person alleged to have been bullied

- a. Identify a member of the coach/volunteer team who will act as a point of contact for the person.
- b. Find a reliable friend or group of friends who will accompany the person and report any incidents
- c. Identify times and places of Bullying and minimise opportunities by supervision
- d. Provide advice to the coaching/volunteering team on preventing Bullying e.g. seating arrangements
- e. Communicate clear expectations of behaviour
- f. Communicate and act on any breach of disciplinary policies.
- g. Contact the person involved and if appropriate, a parent. (they may request that parents are not contacted, and the interviewer should then use discretion and note on the interview form.)



Step 3 – Conduct a review meeting. (After a suitable period e.g. 3-6 weeks.)

- a. Interview all those involved to ascertain the level of progress
- b. Monitor and review.

Summary for immediate response

The person in charge of the group should always try to stop bullying behaviour as quickly as possible

- Children should not be forced to shake hands with each other
- If an adult is involved in the bullying behaviour, this should be stopped immediately
- Parents should always be told – this may happen after the behaviour has been sorted out
- The Club Children's Officer should be told. The CCO should not need to do anything unless the bullying behaviour continues
- Reaching a solution straightaway is usually better for all young people involved.

All those working with young people should encourage the group to follow the Codes of Conduct

- Only those involved, their parents and the CCO need to be told about what has happened; the CCO will note the behaviour, the actions and the outcome – this record will remain with the CCO.

Use of sanctions

If bullying behaviour cannot be resolved through the No Blame (See below) approach the issue should be sent forward as a disciplinary matter through the correct process to the Complaints and Disciplinary Committee. The Complaints and Disciplinary Committee will deal with the matter through the WBC Complaints and Disciplinary procedures and may issue sanctions depending on their findings.

Restorative approach with young people

The preferred method to deal with reports of bullying behaviour is the No Blame approach to resolve the behaviour. This can help restore or repair a previously positive relationship and allows the young people involved to consider their feelings, their behaviour and the effects of bullying on everyone.

The No Blame approach - The NO BLAME approach seeks a resolution for young people involved in bullying behaviour whilst maintaining their relationship within their peer group. Young people involved often want certain behaviours to stop without a need for punishments to be imposed. This approach is often difficult for adults to reconcile, often wanting punishments to be handed out. The guidance should be taken from young people involved.

The NO BLAME approach encourages young people to recognise the impact of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing it. Using this approach, a previous relationship between individuals or within a team may be re-established and this is often the preferred option for the young people involved.



The ethos behind the NO BLAME approach is to: -

- EXPLAIN the problem, i.e. that someone seems to be unhappy, seems to be picked on etc. and explain how that person is feeling; this should not accuse anyone.
- ASK for ideas as to how to help this person
- LEAVE the individual/group to put their ideas into practice
- MEET with the individuals involved to check how the behaviour has changed
- SHARE the responsibility of changing the behaviour and encouraging everyone to speak to a trusted adult if there is bullying behaviour in the Club

The NO BLAME approach does not attempt to get 'confessions'; it seeks to get an acknowledgement of behaviour and provides an opportunity for young people to change hurtful behaviour.

There may be issues that are not resolved through the NO BLAME approach, where behaviour continues.

Bullying behaviour is a breach of a code of conduct and may have to be dealt with through a disciplinary process. However, the outcome for young people is far better when issues can be resolved through such a restorative practice.

Applying the NO BLAME Approach

Step 1: Meet with a young person who is the target of the bullying behaviour. If there has been an incident of bullying behaviour, talk to the young person who is the target of the behaviour. Find out who is involved and what the young person is now feeling.

Try asking the following questions:

- What was the behaviour that has caused upset?
- Are you physically hurt and/or how are you feeling?
- Who was involved in the behaviour, i.e. was it in your own peer group?
- When and where did it happen?

Actively listen and advise the young person of the next steps that will be taken

Step 2: Meet with all involved - including those who appear responsible for the bullying behaviour, some of the backup and audience participants. This does necessarily need to be a whole squad. Meet the individuals informally or if meeting with the group, getting everyone's points of view and their suggested solutions will be necessary.

Step 3: Explain the problem at the meeting i.e. it appears there is something going on in general terms without apportioning blame, e.g. you might suggest the target of the bullying behaviour doesn't seem to be happy, and you have heard they have been called names/left out/picked on etc.

Ask questions like:



- What do you think they are feeling?
- How would you feel if it was you?
- What would you do if it happened to you?
- What could we do to see it does not happen again?

Do not use specific details of the incident or allocate blame; however, explain how that person might be feeling e.g. loneliness, feeling left out, being rejected, or laughed at. Listen and watch out for reactions and pick up on comments without accusing or isolating anyone. This is an opportunity to find out how others feel about bullying behaviour.

Step 4: Ask the group/individual for their ideas. The final outcome of the meeting is to seek suggestions that would make a target of bullying behaviour feel happier.

- Encourage a response by using phrases like: "if it were you what would help you".
- Listen to all suggestions and note them, especially positive responses, as these will help create an environment for the young people involved to work together.
- Agree on actions that will create a positive atmosphere and resolve the behaviour.

Step 5: Leave it to the group or individual. Hand the issue to the group to take the suggested actions forward and arrange to meet again a certain time frame. The responsibility is now with the group of individuals to put the suggested actions in place within that time.

Step 6: Meet them again. Meet everyone, including the person who had been responsible for the bullying behaviour and the target of the behaviour; discuss how things are going and check if there have been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and keeps everyone involved in the process. The Anti-Bullying Policy should be reinforced regularly. This encourages a team or squad to look after each other and that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated. The parents of the young people involved should be informed of the actions taken.

Step 7: Share the responsibility. Meet with the wider group or team to discuss what should be in place to help prevent further incidents and what impact bullying behaviour may have on everyone, e.g. less free time or social activities, or other actions might need to be imposed as a preventative measure. Any action should be used in the spirit of prevention, not as a punishment.