

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members, so they can participate in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all 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 and head coach.

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:

- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding clothing, threatening gestures)
- 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

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. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Tumbles members and coaches have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to reported issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All of our club members, coaches, adult helpers and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is
- All of our club members and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported

- All students 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. Students and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported 'Bullying will not be tolerated'

Signs and Symptoms

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

- says s/he 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- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence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 athletics equipment damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully) has unexplained cuts or bruises
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases:

- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night 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

Procedures:

1. Report bullying incidents to the club child protection officer
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the British Gymnastics Welfare Officer for advice
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in for a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, 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 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, they should follow the procedure outlined below

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 club committee (made up from the club protection officers and Head Coach) should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account
3. The same 3 persons should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed
4. If bullying has in their view taken place the students should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should 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 student/s can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated

6. All coaches involved with students should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning. In the case of adults reported to be bullying students, the Welfare Officer should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a coach, child protection awareness training may be recommended. More serious cases may be referred to the police and/or social services.

Prevention:

- The club will have a written constitution (Child Protection Policies and Procedures), which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part
- All students and parents will sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club
- The club welfare officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with members/athletes/Instructors to discuss the issue openly and constructively