Ottershaw Junior Football Club – Anti-Bullying Policy

Ottershaw Junior Football Club is committed to providing a safe, positive and inclusive environment for all children. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, players and parents should feel confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly, fairly and effectively.

This policy explains what bullying is, how we prevent it, and how we respond when it happens.

1. What Is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour that is:

- **Repeated**
- **Intentional**
- **Hurtful** (physically or emotionally)
- **Targeted at an individual or group**

Bullying can take many forms, including:

Physical

- Hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging belongings

Verbal

- Name-calling, teasing, threats, insults

Emotional

- Excluding someone, spreading rumours, intimidation

Online / Social Media

- Hurtful messages
- Sharing images without consent
- Excluding someone from group chats
- Mocking or harassing online

Football-Specific Bullying

- Criticising mistakes
- Blaming individuals for results
- Targeting weaker players

- Pressuring children to perform
- Making fun of ability, confidence or physical development

Bullying is **not** occasional disagreements, fallouts or misunderstandings — but these can escalate if not addressed.

2. Our Commitment

Ottershaw JFC will:

- Create a culture where bullying is never tolerated
- Promote respect, kindness and inclusion
- Encourage children to speak up if something feels wrong
- Act quickly and appropriately when concerns arise
- Support both the child being bullied and the child displaying bullying behaviour
- Work with parents to resolve issues constructively
- Follow FA safeguarding procedures at all times

3. Prevention

We prevent bullying by:

Coaching Approach

- Using positive, encouraging language
- Supporting mixed-ability participation
- Ensuring all children feel included
- Teaching respect for teammates, opponents and officials
- Celebrating effort, teamwork and learning

Environment

- Clear Codes of Conduct for players, parents and coaches
- Supervision at all sessions and matches
- Encouraging children to report concerns
- Ensuring safe communication channels
- Monitoring team dynamics and behaviour patterns

Education

- Helping children understand what bullying is
- Teaching empathy, teamwork and resilience
- Reinforcing club values regularly

4. Reporting Bullying

Bullying can be reported by:

- The child experiencing it
- A teammate
- A parent/carer
- A coach or volunteer
- A referee or opposition coach

Reports should be made to:

Club Welfare Officer: Stuart Moore **Club Secretary:** Laura Barton-Wright **Coach/Team Manager:** (for initial concerns)

Children will always be listened to and taken seriously.

5. How the Club Responds

When bullying is reported, the Club will:

Step 1 — Listen & Record

- Listen carefully to the child or parent
- Record details of the incident
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing
- Assess whether it is a safeguarding concern

Step 2 — Investigate

- Speak to those involved
- Gather information from coaches, parents or witnesses
- Review patterns of behaviour
- Consider whether the behaviour is repeated or escalating

Step 3 — Take Action

Actions may include:

- A conversation with the child displaying bullying behaviour
- A reminder or warning
- A behaviour plan or support strategy
- Temporary separation of players
- Parent meeting
- Temporary suspension from training or matches
- Referral to Surrey FA for serious or repeated incidents

Step 4 — Support

We will support:

The child experiencing bullying

- Check in regularly
- Provide reassurance and guidance
- Ensure they feel safe at sessions

The child displaying bullying behaviour

- Help them understand the impact
- Provide guidance on positive behaviour
- Work with parents to support change

6. Safeguarding Concerns

If bullying involves:

- Threats
- Harassment
- Physical harm
- Online abuse
- Adults bullying children
- Discriminatory behaviour (racism, sexism, homophobia, disability-related bullying)

It will be treated as a **safeguarding concern** and escalated immediately to:

- The Club Welfare Officer

- Surrey FA Safeguarding Team
- The FA
- Police or Children's Services (if required)

7. Responsibilities

Players

- Treat everyone with respect
- Speak up if something feels wrong
- Include others and be kind

Parents

- Model positive behaviour
- Support the club's anti-bullying approach
- Report concerns promptly
- Avoid negative or critical behaviour towards children

Coaches

- Create a safe, inclusive environment
- Address behaviour early
- Model respect and kindness
- Report concerns immediately

Club Committee

- Ensure policies are followed
- Support investigations
- Maintain records securely
- Review incidents to improve practice

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if FA guidance changes.