



Mallusk Harriers  
Academy Sports Club  
Mallusk Road  
Newtownabbey  
BT36 4QE

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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 athletes (senior and junior) 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 one of the club welfare officers, safeguarding officer or any committee member.

### What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression to hurt another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Racist
- Sexual
- Homophobic
- Verbal

Being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending a hurtful text, WhatsApp, SMS or comments on Facebook posts, messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding spikes/clothing, threatening gestures) pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence

racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

### 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. Athletes (senior and junior) who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

This club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. Objectives of this Policy

- All committee members, coaches, athletes (senior and Junior) , parents and club members should have an understanding of what bullying is.

- All committee members, and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All athletes (senior and junior) 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. Athletes (senior and junior) and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

### Signs and Symptoms

A member 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 member:

- Says 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
- steps down from a volunteer role

In more extreme cases

- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other members
- stops eating
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- leaves the club

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 welfare officer or a member of the committee.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to Athletics NI for advice
3. In the case of Juniors Parents should be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. In the case of Seniors the Coach will be informed and may be asked to monitor and report
5. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
6. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
7. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

8. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution, and the alleged bully may be asked to leave the club

#### 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 a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/not appropriate a small panel (Made up of Chairman, Welfare Officer, Safeguarding Officer, Secretary, committee members) should meet with the senior or parent and junior 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 persons/team should meet with the alleged Junior/Senior who has instigated bullying (in the case of juniors) 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 the bullying has in their view taken place the athletes (senior and junior) 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.

Date Agreed by Club Management Group \_\_\_\_\_

Date for last review: January 2021