Wensleydale RUFC
Anti-Bullying Policy
Updated: November 2022

Prevention
• The club has a written Safeguarding Policy, which embraces the RFU's Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Toolkit; this includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-Bullying policy is one part.
• The Safeguarding Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively

Statement of intent
We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in Rugby in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our Club.

If bullying does occur, all club 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 Safeguarding Officer or any committee member.

What is bullying?

Definition: "Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others"

Bullying can take many forms, but its aim is always to make a person feel upset, intimidated or afraid:

Most common forms of bullying are:

• Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
• Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
• Emotional: making threats, spreading rumours, excluding, ignoring etc.
• Non-verbal: making suggestive, provocative or intimidating gestures
• E-bullying: sending threatening or upsetting messages or images
• Property: threats against or damage to a person's property

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.

Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. This Club has a responsibility to respon promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this policy

• All members, officials, coaching staff, players and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
• All members, officials, coaching staff, players and parents should know what the Club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported. All can be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
• Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and indicators

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 he or she 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 training kit damaged
• has possessions go “missing”
• asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the 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

• Report bullying incidents to the Safeguarding Officer or a member of the club's committee.
• In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the D&W Safeguarding Officer
• Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
• If necessary and appropriate, the Social Services and/or Police will be consulted.
• The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
• An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
• If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action
In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the club who is under 19 (Youth & Minis):
• The Safeguarding Officer should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate.
• It is anticipated that in all cases where the allegation is made regarding a coach, team manager, club official
the D&W Safeguarding Officer and/or Social Services will be informed.
• More serious cases may be referred to the Police.

Recommended club action (particularly age grade incidents)

If the club decides that it is appropriate to deal with the situation the following procedure will be followed:
• Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that an apology solves the problem.
• If this fails/not appropriate, a panel of 3 members, appointed by the Disciplinary Secretary, 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.
• The same panel 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.
• If bullying has, in their view, taken place the individual 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.
• In some cases the parent of the bully or bullied player 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.
• All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.