



## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Statement of Intent

***We at The Walking Football Association (WFA) are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our participants so they can participate in activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our Trust. If bullying does occur, all participants or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING Organisation This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Designated Safeguarding Officer or lead coach of the session.***

*A child/ Vulnerable adult may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Everyone should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child/vulnerable adult:*

- says he or she is being bullied
- is unwilling to go to sessions
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- feels ill before training sessions
- comes home with clothes torn or training equipment 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.

*Or, in more extreme cases, if a child:*

- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other people or siblings
- stops eating
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problem, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

## **Procedures**

1. Report bullying incidents to the Senior Safeguarding Officer (John Croot), or the Lead Coach at the session .
2. Parents/carers should be informed and will be asked to come in for a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate the 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 WFA will initiate disciplinary action. If the WFA decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation they should follow the procedure outlined below:
  - Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem
  - If this fails or is not appropriate a small panel (made up from Directors, Senior Safeguarding Officer, Coaches, Chief Executive) should meet with the parents/carers 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 members should meet with the alleged bully and parents/carers 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/carers of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The WFA 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.
- In the Case of Adults reported to be bullying anyone within the WFA Under 18, the Senior Safeguarding Officer should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a team manager.
- More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Social Services.

## **Prevention**

The WFA Senior Safeguarding Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the WFA, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively. This policy is based on guidance provided to schools by KIDSCAPE. KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying. KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300 or you can access their website via [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk). A Code of Conduct, to which all staff will have to adhere, is given to all staff.