



Tyneside Ignite Cheerleading CFC

Anti-bullying Policy

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Declaration

At Tyneside Ignite and Ignite Barnsley, we aim to provide a safe, caring, and friendly environment for all of our athletes and coaches to allow them to train and coach effectively, improve their skills and help them maximise their potential. We believe that all bullying behaviour is unacceptable. We expect athletes to feel safe in the gym and at competitions. We want them to understand issues relating to safety, such as bullying, and know how to seek support from the programme should they feel unsafe. We aim to continue to develop and maintain a community that is free from bullying. If bullying occurs it is dealt with swiftly and sensitively. We aim to identify incidents of bullying at an early stage and to take them seriously. Evidence is taken impartially and acted upon, with the issue and behaviour being addressed.

What is Bullying?

We say a child is being bullied or picked on when another child or group of children, repeatedly say or do nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a child is hit, kicked, threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes/texts or when isolated. It is also bullying when a child is teased repeatedly. It can be difficult for the child being bullied to defend him or herself. It is not bullying when two children occasionally argue or have a disagreement, or if an athlete wishes to spend some time with other athletes.

Signs of Bullying

- Unwillingness to come to training
- Withdrawn, isolated behaviour
- Complaining about missing possessions
- Refusal to talk about the problem
- Being easily distressed
- Incontinence

If difficulties are associated with a child from a minority racial or cultural background; a child with SEN; or where there are indications of sexual harassment, these indicators may well confirm bullying is occurring.

Definitions of Types of Bullying

- Physical Bullying: Physical bullying occurs when a person uses overt bodily acts to gain power over peers. Physical bullying can include kicking, punching, hitting or other physical attacks.
- Verbal Bullying: Verbal bullying occurs when someone uses language to gain power over his or her peers. The verbal bully makes use of relentless insults and teasing to bully his or her peers. For instance, a verbal bully may make fun of a peer's lack of physical capabilities, may tease a peer for being a "dummy" or "nerd", and/or may call a peer names based on appearance. Verbal bullies are one of the more difficult types of bullies to identify since their attacks tend to only occur when adults are not present. Even though verbal bullying creates no physical damage, this type of abuse can have lasting psychological impacts on victims.
- Relational Bullying: Relational Aggression (R.A.) is a form of bullying common among tweens, and especially teen girls. The behaviour describes an individual, or a group of individuals, who try to hurt a peer, or sacrifice another's standing within their peer group. Girls who exhibit Relational Aggression are sometimes referred to as Mean Girls.
- Cyber Bullying: Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass, or target another person.
- SEND Related Bullying (Special Education Needs or disabled children): The research that has been conducted on bullying among children with disabilities and special needs indicates that these children may be at particular risk of being bullied by their peers.

- Sexist/Transgender Bullying: Sexist, sexual and trans-phobic bullying occurs when a pupil (or group), usually repeatedly, harms another pupil or intentionally makes them unhappy because of their sex or because they may not be perceived to conform to normal gender roles. The root cause of sexist and sexual bullying is gender inequality.
- Homophobic Bullying: Any hostile or offensive action against lesbians, gay males, bisexual or transgender people, or those perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.
- Racist Bullying: Any hostile or offensive action against people because of their skin colour, cultural or religious background or ethnic origin.

Reporting and Responding to Bullying

Investigations of bullying will be recorded on an incident report form from all parties involved. All reported incidents will be taken seriously and investigated involving all parties. Tyneside Ignite Cheerleading aims to have a clear and well publicised system to report bullying for the whole programme (including athletes, coaching/non-coaching staff, and parents/carers) this includes those who are the victims of bullying or have witnessed bullying behaviour (bystanders). Victims and perpetrators will go through a restorative approach to re-establish well-being between those involved and ensure harmony and safety. Sanctions imposed: verbal warning, written warning, suspension, and exclusion.

What to do if an Athlete is being Bullied

1. Athletes/victims: If someone is doing or saying something you don't like, speak to them, tell them you don't like it and ask them to stop, you may even want to tell them you'll inform a coach if it continues. If it continues, tell an adult coach, the adult will listen to you and make a note of the details. The person who is bullying you will be helped to understand what they are doing wrong; they may also need to record their version of events so an investigation can be made. A coach will help you both to deal with it the right way and will monitor the situation for a short period of time.
2. Parents/Guardians: Watch out for signs that your child is unhappy at training, e.g. refusing to attend, appearing withdrawn or sad, loss of appetite, disturbed sleep patterns. If your child is being bullied, please tell a member of staff, or encourage your child to do so, this will be recorded and investigated thoroughly. Reassure your child that staff and adults are here to help. Parents/guardians should not get involved unnecessarily or in a dis-tasteful manner, this has previously proven to make situations worse, and make it more difficult for a coach to resolve quickly. If coaches feel parents need to be involved, they will call a meeting. However, parents will be made aware of any incidences raised by or concerning their athlete
3. Bystanders: if you witness someone else being bullied, don't keep it to yourself. Inform a coach discretely. You may be asked to record what you witnessed, but don't worry, this will never be discussed with others, it will just help coaches get to the bottom of what's really going on. Check in with the victim, ask if they're OK and be the friend they very likely need at that time.

Ignite Cheerleading:

- Encourages co-operative training/competing together.
- Uses peer pressure to promote bullying as unacceptable behaviour.
- Encourages children 'to tell' when it's getting too much.
- Takes bullying seriously.
- Investigates facts of an incident impartially; take account of evidence and all views - bullies, victims and witnesses will be talked with separately.
- Operates a system of sanctions which reflect the seriousness of the offence.
- Operates a recording and reporting procedure as appropriate to ensure those involved are kept informed.
- Promotes a shared approach with parents/carers.
- Does not tolerate lying about being bullied, or bullying.

Procedures Once Incident is Reported

A restorative approach will be the preferred approach to help all parties understand any wrong doings, and to prevent such incidences from occurring again.

- The incident will be investigated quickly, fairly, and positively – using the 'no blame approach' where suitable - children put forward their point of view without being accused - the bully and the victim should be spoken to separately by their lead coach. All parties produce a written record (an adult may scribe). Witness information will be obtained where possible. If deemed necessary, discussions with both parties are documented and filed.
- Children involved in incidents will be informed of the sanctions to be levied and the reasons for them in relation to their behaviour. It may then be appropriate to discuss behaviour together. The bully should reassure the victim that it will not happen again and will be asked to apologise verbally or in writing/picture as appropriate. (Restorative justice approach.)
- All coaching/non-coaching staff who encounter/coach the bully and bullied, will be made aware of the problem so that they can monitor behaviour and ensure the safety of the child who has been bullied.
- The victim will be monitored to ensure that they feel safe and secure. Strategies may need to be put in place to ensure their self-esteem is not damaged.
- The bully will be helped to recognise their unsociable behaviour and offered support to modify it.
- Existing disciplinary sanctions are used only with a view to improving the behaviour of those responsible and making the victim feel safe. Allow a 'cooling off' time for children involved if appropriate.
- If the incidents continue, further interviews/meetings/support counselling will take place with both bully and victim and further sanctions implemented.
- Exclusion proceedings if necessary. This will be at the coaches/head coach's discretion.
- Incidents of bullying will be reported to parents/carers. Recording bullying and evaluating the policy. Bullying incidents will be recorded in an incident form. The information stored will be used to ensure individual incidents are followed up. It will also be used to identify trends and inform preventative work within the programme. Support through discussion and role models will be provided for the victim and the bully.

Useful Websites

www.bullying.co.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk [www.anti-](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

bullyingalliance.org.uk

www.kidscape.org.uk

Acknowledgement

By enrolling in our cheerleading programme, athletes and their parents/guardians acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to comply with this anti-bullying policy. If a child or adult is being bullied/harassed/victimised, you can approach your athlete's coach, another coach within the programme or the Tyneside Ignite's Safeguard Lead.