

# **HASTINGS RUNNERS**

## **ANTI – BULLYING POLICY**

### **Statement of intent**

We are committed to providing a caring and safe environment for all our members so that they can run in a secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all club members or parents/guardians should be able to inform and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and efficiently. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to report their concerns either to the Club Welfare Officer or any committee member.

Bullying can come in many guises, but always results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, tormenting etc
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumours
- Racist – racial taunts, gestures, graffiti
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic – because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality

### **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. The impact upon a young person can be devastating and in some cases affect all aspects of their life, in extreme circumstances it can lead to suicide threats or even attempts.

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

Objectives of this policy:

- All club members, coaches, and parents/guardians should have an understanding of what bullying is
- All club members and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
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- All runners and parents/guardians should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Runners and parents/carers should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported
- Bullying will not be tolerated

### Signs and indicators

A young person 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if a child says he or she is being bullied; is unwilling to go to or becomes ill before club sessions; becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence; loses their possessions; comes home with clothes torn; has unexplained cuts and bruises; starts asking for or stealing money (to pay the bully); is frightened to say what's wrong; gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

In more extreme cases, a young person may cry themselves to sleep at night or have nightmares; start stammering; become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable; start bullying other children or siblings; stop eating; attempt or threaten suicide; run away. 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 club committee, or contact the Association of Running Club's Child Protection Officer
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the ARC CPO
3. Parents/guardians should be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, the Police will be informed
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 (or bullies) change their behaviour
7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue, then the club will institute disciplinary action under the club constitution

### 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 that a genuine apology solves the problem
2. If this fails/is not appropriate, then a small panel (made up from the chairman, CWO, secretary, committee members) should meet with parent/guardian 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
3. The same 3 members should meet with the alleged bully and parents/guardians, and ask them to give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed by all as a true account
4. 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 possible at this time
5. In some cases the parent/guardian of the bully or bullied club member can be asked to attend training sessions. The club committee should monitor the situation for a period to ensure bullying is not being repeated
6. All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process

### In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the club under 18

1. The ARC Child Protection Officer should always be informed, and will advise on action to be taken
2. It is anticipated that in most cases involving a coach or team manager, some training may be recommended
3. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Social Services

### Prevention

1. The club will have a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying is one part

2. All club members and parents/guardians will sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club

3. The Club Welfare 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