

# **ANTI BULLYING POLICY**

## **Statement of Intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all skaters so they can participate in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all athletes 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 a club welfare officer, any committee member, coach or member of staff.

## **Bullying can be:**

- Emotional- being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding possessions/clothing, threatening gestures)
- Physical- pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist- racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual -unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal- name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, making people feel embarrassed, silly or inadequate.
- An adult/parent shouting at a child or pushing too hard during training
- A coach adopting a “win at any cost” attitude

## **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 who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Staff and club committees have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## **Objectives of this Policy**

- All committee members, coaches, athletes, 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 and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- We ARE taking bullying seriously. Athletes and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

## **Signs and Symptoms**

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 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- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence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
- 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**

1. Report bullying incidents to a coach, the club welfare officer or a member of the committee, or a member of the rink staff
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to The National Ice Skating Association for advice
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, 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 club or staff will initiate disciplinary action.

### **Action**

- 1) Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be a genuine apology solves the problem.
- 2) If this fails a meeting with a small committee, the parent and child alleging bullying should be arranged 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 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.
- 4) If bullying has in their view taken place the athletes should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues.

### **Sanctions**

Removal from the ice for a short period of time escalating through to permanent exclusion if bullying continues.