



Anti-Bullying Policy

The Club's commitment

OFISC will:

- Recognise its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all participants from harm.
- Promote and implement this anti-bullying policy in addition to its safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Seek to ensure that bullying behaviour is not accepted or condoned.
- Require all members of the Club to be given information about, and sign up to, this policy.
- Take action to investigate and respond to any alleged incidents of bullying.
- Encourage and facilitate children and young people to play an active part in developing and adopting a code of conduct to address bullying.
- Ensure that coaches are given access to information, guidance and/or training on bullying.

The participant's commitment

Each participant, coach, volunteer or official will:

- Respect every child's need for, and rights to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available.
- Respect the feelings and views of others.
- Recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special and should be valued.
- Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress.
- Be committed to the early identification of bullying, and prompt and collective action to deal with it.
- Ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and accessible for all to see.
- Report incidents of bullying they see – by doing nothing you are condoning bullying.

Bullying

Every child has the right to participate in ice skating free from the fear of bullying. Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. Bullying has the potential to cause permanent harm (physical, emotional or psychological). OFISC will take steps to prevent bullying behaviour wherever possible and respond to incidents when they occur.

Bullying can take the form of:

- verbal: name calling, teasing, threatening, spreading rumours, sarcasm, racist taunts, homophobic bullying, graffiti and gestures
- physical: hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, stealing/breaking belongings

- emotional: ignoring, hurtful emails/text messages, excluding from activities, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating.

Although anyone can be the target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons – being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture. Bullies come from all walks of life; they bully for a variety of different reasons and may even have been bullied or abused themselves. Typically, bullies can have low self-esteem, be excitable, aggressive or jealous. Crucially, they have learned how to gain power over others.

Identifying bullying

The competitive nature of sport can make it an ideal environment for the bully. The bully in ice skating can be:

- a parent who pushes too hard
- a coach who adopts a ‘win-at-all costs’ philosophy
- a player who intimidates
- an official who places unfair pressure on a person
- a spectator who shouts abuse.

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, young people and vulnerable adults, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm including self-harm or in extreme cases, suicide.

There are a number of signs that may indicate a person is being bullied:

- sudden reluctance to go to activities such as training or events that they used to enjoy or a drop off in performance/attendance
- regularly feeling ill before training or events
- physical signs such as stomach-aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bedwetting, scratching and bruising, coming home with damaged equipment or clothes
- behavioural changes such as becoming withdrawn, anxious, clingy, depressed, tearful, aggressive, unreasonable
- start bullying others; a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions

In more extreme cases, they might stop eating, start stammering, cry themselves to sleep have nightmares, run away or threaten/attempt suicide. These signs may indicate other problems or be a reaction to other events in a child or young person’s life but the possibility of bullying should be considered.

Homophobic bullying

Lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people may face homophobic bullying. Homophobia is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can lead to actions that cause LGB people to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued.

Adults bullying children or young people

Any adult who is suspected of bullying children/young people should receive clear guidance on how their behaviour needs to be modified and monitored to ensure this is achieved.

Serious cases (for example if the bullying included physical abuse or racist name calling), may be considered abuse and so may be referred to the Police or Children’s Social Care by the Club’s Safeguarding/Welfare Officer.

Support for the Victim and the Bully

The bully will need support to help them realise why their behaviour is wrong and assistance to change their behaviour. If warranted, British Ice Skating (BIS) should involve the bully's parents and the young person's school (if appropriate) in ensuring their behaviour is improving and any problems which may have caused them to bully are being addressed.

The victim's parents should be involved and they should be supported to ensure they feel able to remain in the programme.

Actions to help victims and prevent bullying

- take all signs of bullying very seriously
- encourage all children to speak and share their concerns and help victims to speak out and tell the person in charge/someone in authority: create an open environment
- investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately
- reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no one else (if a young person, you should inform the bully(ies) parents)
- keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when)
- report any incidents to the club Welfare/Safeguarding Officer, who will forward concerns to the BIS Safeguarding Lead for advice as appropriate.

Actions to take against bullying

- talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s)
- if the bully is a young person, inform the bully(ies) parents
- insist on the return of borrowed items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim
- impose sanctions as necessary
- encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour
- hold meetings with the families to report on progress
- inform all organisation members of action taken
- keep a written record of action taken.

Useful websites

- www.bullying.co.uk
- www.beatbullying.org

Contact information

OFISC SAFEGUARDING/WELFARE OFFICER

Email: safe@ofisc.co.uk

BIS SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

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