



Freedom RG

Anti-Bullying Policy

2021-2022



Principles and Values

At Freedom RG we take bullying and its impact very seriously. Gymnasts and parents should feel reassured that known incidents of bullying will be responded to. Bullying will not be tolerated in any shape and form.

Objectives of this Policy

Some of us may have encountered bullying at some point in their lives and we recognise that everybody deals with it differently.

The aim of this policy is to work together to ensure that our Club is a safe place for children and adults, regardless if the Club community is directly or indirectly affected by bullying or not.

All Coaches, members of staff, volunteers, gymnasts and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and its impact to people.

All Coaches and members of staff should know what the Club policy is on bullying and follow its procedures when a case is reported.

All gymnasts and parents should know what the Club policy is on bullying and what they should do if a case arises.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is an unacceptable behaviour used by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group of people either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can be perpetuated for a short time or be continuous over long periods of time. Bullying may also be direct or indirect.

Bullying can be classified as:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding equipment, threatening gestures)
- Physical: pushing, kicking, biting, hitting, punching or any kind of violence.
- Racial: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic: because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
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- Cyber bullying: related to internet or social media mis-use through the use of (but not to be considered as exhaustive list): emailing, chat messaging services (Twitter, Whatsapp, Facebook Messenger, etc.), Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, Youtube, etc.
- Mobile threats by text messaging and calls
- Misuse of associated technology (not exhaustive list): i.e. photo or mobile cameras, video recording, games consoles (online or offline), etc.

Bullying may be related to race, gender, religion, culture, SEN or disability, appearance or health condition, home circumstances, young carers, financial hardship and poverty, sexual orientation, sexism or sexual.

Bullying may take place anywhere: in the gymnasium, waiting area, changing area, toilets, on the journey to and from the Club, on trips and even on the cyberspace.

It can take place in group activities and between families in the local community.

Perpetrators and Victims

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of one person or persons (perpetrator) over another individual or group of people (victim).

This can be achieved by:

- The size of the individual,
- The strength of the individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying or using email, social networking sites, texts

All Staff and Coaches must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of child abuse: do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs, which means that they may be unable to realise what others may be doing to them.

Staff and Coaches must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable gymnasts, those coming from troubled families or those responding to emotional problems or mental health issues: this may bring about a propensity to be unkind to others or may make them more likely to fall victim to the behaviour of others.



Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim and everybody has the right to be treated with respect. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Gymnasts who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Prevention

At Freedom RG we use a variety of methods to support children to avoid abusive behaviour.

The ethos and working philosophy of Freedom RG means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Good and polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded. Coaches will regularly enforce that bullying is an unacceptable behaviour and expect all children to show kindness towards one another. We also encourage children to feel safe in discussing with members of staff any uncomfortable situations and report any incidents or concerns about other children's behaviour.

Coaches, Welfare officers and any member of staff or volunteers must follow our Code of Conduct policies and support all children in our Club. Staff must be careful not to highlight differences between children and always show a fair behaviour towards all to avoid giving children a reason to use any highlighted differences as excuses for teasing. Staff should always reinforce to children that they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.

If a child feels that they are being bullied, there are some actions that we encouraged them to follow:

- Tell a friend
- Tell the Welfare Officer or coach whom they feel they can trust
- Write their concern and give it to their coach
- Tell a parent or adult at home whom they feel they can trust

Outcomes

All known or reported incidents of bullying will be investigated by the Welfare Officer or by a senior member of staff.

Parents of the perpetrator will be informed about the incident and discuss about any concerns that they may have.

In Freedom RG we strongly believe that any child displaying unacceptable behaviour towards someone else should genuinely apologise to the other children involved (as appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding). In more serious cases, the Welfare Officer may decide to take further actions to ensure the incident is dealt with appropriately. We request that all parents support the Club with any actions that may arise following an incident and adhere to our Code of Conduct policies.



In extremely serious cases, external bodies (Social Care, Police, the Council) may be requested to support the Club or family in dealing with a child continually demonstrating unacceptable behaviour towards others.

If a child displays an on-going lack of response to sanctions and doesn't demonstrate a change in behaviour or unwillingness to alter their behavioural choices, exclusion from Freedom RG club will be considered by the Welfare Officers, the Club Secretary and the Club Head coach.

Bullying Incident process

When an incident occurs, either reported by children, parents or members of staff, it must be recorded in the club Bullying Log and inform the Welfare officer.

The following incident information should be reported in the Bullying Log:

- date of occurrence,
- children/people involved,
- description of incident,
- any actions (including sanctions) taken and resolution.

The Welfare Officer will monitor logged incidents overtime to ensure repeated bullying cases will not take place.

The Welfare Officer and/or members of staff may need to speak with children and their parents involved in the incident, in order to resolve the incident.

Members of staff may be made aware of such incident, so they can be vigilant and that further incidents by the same child(ren) may be prevented from happening in the future.

Advice to Parents

If you are a parent of a child whom you suspect is subject of bullying, do report it to the Club Welfare Officer or a member of staff, who will be available to support you and your child. The Club will follow the "Bullying incident" process and deal with the case appropriately.

If you are still concerned, you can also contact:

- Children 1st Child Protection in Sport Unit - Tel 0141 418 5670
- The NSPCC Helpline on 0800 800 5000 or www.nspcc.org.uk or ww.childnet.org.uk (NSPCC support service for young people)
- Anti-Bullying Service – respect me at enquire@respectme.org.uk Stop It Now on 0808 1000 900 or www.stopitnow.org.uk