



Abbey Gymnastics Anti-Bullying Policy



Bullying by children or adults on children within Abbey Gymnastics C.I.C. will never be tolerated. All BG clubs must put in place a robust bullying policy that ensures that all forms of bullying are taken seriously and responded to appropriately in accordance with BG standards. Abbey Gymnastics encourage an environment where independence is celebrated and individuals can flourish without fear.

Bullying is a behaviour, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group; physically or emotionally. There is often a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim/s to prevent or deal with the perpetrator's actions. The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to young people, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self-harm).

Bullying can occur between:

- An adult and young person.
- A young person and young person.
- A parent and own child.

Bullying may take many forms and may be conducted in person or through the actions of another person/other people. These include: -

- Emotional: for example, being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding belongings, threatening gestures), name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing/taunts, graffiti. "banter" can be classed as a disguised form of bullying.
- Physical: for example, pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Sexual: for example, unwanted physical contact or sexually offensive comment/s.
- Cyber: for example, email & internet chat room misuse, mobile phone threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of technology (camera & video footage) or misuse of social media.

Bullying may also take the form of singling out individuals because they belong to a particular group or are different in some way from others (prejudice-based bullying) and may include: -

- Racist and religious based bullying.
- Homophobic/ bi-phobic/ trans-phobic: because of their sexual orientation, or perceived, or actual gender identity.
- Disablist: might focus on, or exploits, a particular aspect of the individual's disability.

It is acknowledged that the competitive nature of sport can result in tensions that may lead to bullying but bullying cannot be condoned in any circumstance.

In addition to the above, examples of **bullying in gymnastics** could be:

- A gymnast who intimidates fellow gymnasts inappropriately.
- Excluding a gymnast from a group activity.
- A coach who adopts a win-at-all costs philosophy.
- A parent who pushes too hard.
- An official who places unfair pressure on a person.

In order to discourage Bullying, we at Abbey

- Create an open environment and provide adequate supervision at all times.
- Encourage children to speak out and share any concerns with the coach in charge, the Welfare Officer or any other responsible adult.
- Take all signs or allegations of possible bullying seriously.

Our Coaches endeavour to:

- Foster in our gymnasts self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our gymnasts.
- Discuss bullying with all groups, so that every gymnast learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a coach about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to our gymnasts who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to our Designated Welfare Officer, Michele Cowan.
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

The Responsibilities of our Gymnasts:

We expect our gymnasts to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the gymnast who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

The Responsibilities of Parents, Guardians or Carers:

We ask our parents, guardians or carers to support their children and the Club by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying to their coach or our Designated Welfare Officer, Michele Cowan and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other gymnasts.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying. Informing the Club of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.
- Co-operating with the Club, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

The Responsibilities of All:

Everyone should:

- Work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- Steps taken to support and respond to the needs of both bullied and bullying gymnasts.
- Records kept
- Action which may be taken:
 - Contacting parents/carers of all gymnasts concerned in the bullying incident
 - Investigation
 - Feedback to those concerned
 - Sanctions

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF THROUGH:

- Workshops
- In house training
- CPD programmes

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- This policy will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis in order to acknowledge and understand changes in governing body regulations and to further develop our duty of care to our members.

Useful Contacts

- **Childline** 0800 1111 - www.childline.org.uk
- **NSPCC Helpline** 0808 800 5000 - www.nspcc.org.uk
- **Child Protection in Sport Unit** - www.thecpsu.org.uk
- **Kidscape** - 020 7730 3300 - www.kidscape.org.uk
- **Parenting NI** (formally Parents Advice Centre) - Freephone 0808 8010 722
www.parentsadvicecentre.org
- **NI Anti-Bullying Forum** - www.niabf.org.uk