



Offaly Rowing Club Anti-Bullying Policy

Version	Date	Author	Changes
0	5 th January 2022	Offaly Rowing Club (using Rowing Ireland template)	New Document
Approved:			

Rowing Ireland and Offaly Rowing Club believes that a primary role of the sport is to provide individuals with the ability to develop to their full rowing potential. Essential to this is provision of a safe learning environment, without fear of being bullied. Bullying can result in psychological damage to those involved. It is an anti-social behaviour, which is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in the sport of rowing. If bullying does occur this policy should outline the procedures for dealing with the situation. This policy applies to all within Rowing Ireland, Provincial Branches and Affiliated Clubs.

BULLYING BEHAVIOUR WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!

Aims of this policy are:

- to create an ethos in which attending a rowing session is a positive experience for all members of the rowing community
- to make clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable in sport
- to enable everyone to feel safe while at rowing and encourage reporting of any bullying
- to support and protect anyone who has been bullied and ensure they are listened to
- to help those who have displayed bullying behaviour to change their ways and to understand why change is needed
- to inform coaches, parents, and others relevant to the rowing community
- to ensure all members of the rowing community feel responsible for combating bullying

Definition of Bullying

'The repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights or needs of another or others.

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour, whether physical or psychological, and usually has the following four features:

- It is repetitive and persistent- though sometimes a single incident can have the same impact over time, as part of a continuous pattern. e.g., Racist bullying.
- It is intentionally harmful- though occasionally not consciously intended by the bully or bystanders.
- It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent or stop it
- It causes distress, fear, loneliness, and lack of confidence Common characteristics include ▪ Motivation to demonstrate power by creating fear and to gain 'respect' by peers.
- Often people who bully have themselves been bullied in the past. They may feel powerless and compensate by trying to intimidate others
- Bullying can be obvious, subtle, hidden, and difficult to prove.
- Males often use physical bullying and threats, but exclusion from groups is more common amongst females.
- Bullying can be by one person, one-on-one, by group against one or group on group.
- Bystanders often show acceptance or approval, and those on the receiving end can see them as part of the problem.

- Bullying in sport can be related to tensions in schools, groups, families, and local communities.

Types of Bullying

Emotional - Unfriendly, exclusion, torment (e.g., hiding belongings, threats, rumours)

Physical - Pushing, kicking, hitting, or any violence

Racist - Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

Sexual - Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

Verbal - Calling names, sarcasm, rumours

Homophobic - Because of, or focussing on, sexuality

Cyberbullying - All types of internet and email misuse, threats by text, calls by mobile phone and other devices, misuse of technology e.g., camera and video.

Exclusion – less obvious. Person appears to be included but regularly excluded from group activity. Or given incorrect information about activity, e.g., times of activity

Extortion – regularly extracting something from someone without returning the “favour” e.g., borrowing money, snacks, drinks etc

Gesture – a look, a signal, pulling a face, imitating the way someone walks, stands etc

Behaviour

We need to learn that one person’s teasing may, to another, be unkind and even cruel. The way behaviour is received is more important rather than what was intended. A person can be bullying and subject to bullying, at the same time. Although some are vulnerable due to physical or social character, anyone can be bullied for any reason or for no reason.

Individuals may resort to bullying for a range of reasons, and Rowing Ireland will support the bully as well as those who are bullied.

All club members - must be aware of how their actions are perceived and take care not to be accused of bullying. The club will prominently display this policy and take appropriate action, via the club's disciplinary procedures for any breach.

Such actions may include -:

- Teasing about characteristics one has little or no control of.
- Inappropriate bad temper
- Ridiculing the actions of one in front of others
- Inconsistency in application of punishment or reward
- Physical intimidation
- Insults or swearing
- Belittling other members

- Non-constructive or unnecessarily personal criticism

People involved

There may be several people involved in incidents of bullying behaviour, directly or indirectly having seen, or heard about what is happening and these may be adults and/or young people. There are four typical types:

1. The person displaying bullying behaviour can be an individual or a group, this may be an individual who is popular, or has discovered their behaviour evokes a reaction. Where a group is involved, they can be those most respected or thought to be part of a good team. People who behave in a bullying manner may be recognised by their behaviours, often where:

- An individual is being intentionally hostile, aggressive, seemingly without reason
- An individual or group exert power over another individual or group, often where an imbalance of power already exists
- Satisfaction is gained from their bullying behaviour
- An individual purposely causes harm to another
- An individual repeats harmful behaviour to another

2. The person or group on the receiving end of the bullying behaviour can be known as the target. Often these are individuals who are different from others or stand out for a reason e.g., different culture, background, sexual orientation; someone with a disability; or a talented or less skilled individual.

3. Those individuals who are onlookers to bullying behaviour, often taking no part, are known as the backup and the audience. They provide the audience and the reaction to the bullying behaviour and may be afraid to speak up in case they become a target of the bullying behaviour.

4. There is usually an individual or group who know what is happening but consider it is not their problem; they do not get involved as they are not affected but don't do anything to stop the behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour involves an adult:

The person in charge should ask to speak with the adult separately, away from any young people or other adults. The person in charge should describe the type of behaviour witnessed and the effect it is having on others, especially young people, highlighting the codes of conduct and the Anti-Bullying policy as reminders about acceptable behaviour. The adult should be asked to stop with such behaviour; if the behaviour is denied or does not change, the person in charge may need to issue an immediate sanction to protect young people or others.

Where bullying behaviour involves young people only:

The person in charge should talk with all the people involved in bullying behaviour as soon as they become aware of the issue and try to reach an agreement about what happened between those involved, highlighting the codes of conduct and the Anti-Bullying Promise as reminders about acceptable behaviour. An immediate sanction may be necessary to deal with the bullying behaviour.

Signs & Symptoms of someone being bullied

Initial impacts of bullying often go un-noticed but may be apparent in mood changes and attitudes. Those bullied often develop insecurity and anxiety. This can cause vulnerability, low self-confidence, and self-esteem. Reluctance to discuss problems through fear of consequences, is common, and the workforce should be alert to this. These may indicate that a person is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travel to and from sessions, or changes to arrangements.
- Unwillingness or refusal to attend or participate, unexplained absence
- Deteriorating performance, poor concentration, or enthusiasm
- Patterns of illness
- Unexplained mood or behavioural change, especially after absences
- Visible anxiety or stress: stammers, withdrawing from activities, etc.
- Spontaneous out of character comments about others
- Stealing or increased requests for money
- Unexplained bruising, cuts, or clothing damage
- Reluctance to discuss distress

Impact of bullying behaviour

Bullying behaviour has an impact on everyone involved. For the person who is the target of bullying behaviour the effects can be felt psychologically and physiologically. The person who is responsible for the bullying behaviour whilst often a popular person amongst their peers may also show signs of low self-esteem, show a lack of empathy and may have been labelled as a 'troublemaker' in the past. If the person who is behaving in a bullying manner is an adult, other young people may be afraid to speak out because of the consequences, i.e., they may be afraid of not being picked for activities or left out of team selections.

Roles & Responsibilities within Offaly Rowing Club:

Anyone who is a target of bullies should not suffer in silence, but try to speak out, to end suffering by themselves and maybe others. Everyone involved in Offaly Rowing Club should work together to combat and, hopefully to reduce and put an end to bullying by adhering to their code of conduct and

- Foster in rowers' self-esteem, self-respect, and respect for others
- Show by example the ambitious standards of personal and social behaviour we expect from all our participants
- Discuss bullying with our rowers, so that each one learns about the damage to the bullied and the bully, and discuss the importance to report any bullying when it happens
- Be alert to signs of distress and other indications of bullying

- Listen to those who have been bullied, take them seriously and act to support & protect.
- Report suspected bullying to the appropriate person on the organisation.
- Follow up any complaint from an individual or friend about bullying, and report back promptly on any actions taken
- Deal with observed bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

Rowers will -

- Avoid getting involved in any kind of bullying, even if it makes you unpopular
- Step in to protect anyone from being bullied unless it is unsafe for you.
- Report to the person in charge or their assistant, any bullying seen or suspected, to avoid secrecy and to help stop further instances

Parents/Carers, Coaches and Assistants will -:

- Watch for distress or unusual behaviour, which might indicate bullying
- Advise their rowers to report any bullying to the person in charge, and explain the dangers of the spread of bullying to themselves and others
- Advise their rowers not to react violently to any form of bullying
- Be supportive to their rowers, reassuring them that suitable action will be taken
- Keep a written note of any reported bullying
- Inform the organisation of any suspected bullying, even if it is other rowers who are involved.
- Co-operate with the rowing community.

If your rowers are accused of bullying, try to get the truth, explain the implications of bullying, both for the bullied and the bullies. Parents and the Club Children's Officer should be informed of the issue by the person in charge and the way it was dealt with including any action necessary if the behaviour continues. It is better to sort issues immediately and quickly and we expect parents and adults to be supportive of this process. The person in charge should also observe the group/individuals to ensure the bullying behaviour does not continue. The person in charge may also submit a disciplinary report to the complaints and disciplinary committee of the Club or to the Rowing Ireland Designated Children's Officer.

Prevent bullying from taking place:

Offaly Rowing Club will pro-actively work to prevent bullying from taking place by:

- Through participation in any Anti-Bullying events available.
- Through meetings of the whole club/organisation with announcement of a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying, and to dispel the idea that bystanders are innocent when bullying occurs.
- Through the organisation's policy for use of mobile phones, to include the reporting of inappropriate use to the police.

- Through anti-bullying information displayed in clubs.
- By role modelling of appropriate behaviour towards others by complete workforce.
- By discussion of procedures with beginners as part of their induction process.
- Through use of experienced age appropriate rowers as mentors with all beginners.
- By having the person in charge of rowing available to all rowers as a first point of contact. Rowing crew/squad -
- Through learning social skills of negotiation, arbitration, and intervention, and learning to consider issues of difference and diversity.
- Through learning what Cyberbullying is and how to prevent yourself becoming a victim not making personal information public, not giving out passwords, and not responding to threatening or rude messages. Learn also what to do if cyberbullied- including keeping messages for proof, using online protection services, telling parents or friends.

Rowing crew/squad -

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Incidents of alleged bullying are to be addressed using Offaly Rowing Clubs anti-bullying procedures

Reference documents:

- Offaly Rowing Club Anti-bullying procedure
- Offaly Rowing Club Complaints and Disciplinary procedure