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**BOWLS SCOTLAND  
ANTI BULLYING  
POLICY**



**MAY 2024**

# ANTI BULLYING POLICY

For Staff, Volunteers, Coaches, Club Members and Young People.

Bowls Scotland believes that every young person and child should be able to take part in Bowls across Scotland, in a welcoming, fun, and safe environment. We believe this welcoming environment should be free from bullying and that our volunteers have an active role in ensuring young people are respected and bullying of any nature will not be tolerated.

Bowls Scotland Believes:



Young people and children have the right to speak up



Young people and children will be listened to and taken seriously

## Policy Statement

Bowls Scotland is fully committed to championing the wellbeing and inclusion of all within our sport. We believe that bullying is never acceptable and that everyone within our sport has the right to participate and perform in a safe and inclusive environment. Bowls Scotland recognises our responsibility in our wellbeing and protection policies to promote safe practice and to protect all members, from harm, poor practice, exploitation, and abuse; this includes bullying.

**In line with Respect for All the definition of Bullying is: “Bullying is face-to-face and/or online behaviour which impacts on a person’s sense of physical and emotional safety, their capacity to feel in control of their life and their ability to respond effectively to the situation they are in. The behaviour does not need to be repeated, or intended to cause harm, for it to have an impact. Bullying behaviour can be physical, emotional or verbal and can cause people to feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out.”**

It is our shared responsibility as to ensure that young people know that:

- *Yes, young people and children have the right to speak up.*
- *Yes, young people and children will be listened to and taken seriously.*
- *No, it will not affect their place in a team or competition, regardless of competing at high performance or national level.*

**If you are aware of a bullying incident, members within the club should follow the appropriate procedures and communication channels to report this behaviour as well as challenge it.**

For details on how to report an incident please see our Safeguarding Guidance on our website here: <https://www.bowlsscotland.com/safeguarding> 

 To report an incident call Lawra Cox on **07711424193**



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## Bowls Scotland will commit to:

- ◇ Respect the human rights of young people and children.
- ◇ Actively developing positive relationships between young people and adults, ensuring the upmost respect, trusting and responsible behaviour to promote positive health and wellbeing.
- ◇ Actively work towards reducing, preventing, and responding efficiently and effectively to bullying behaviour, through the implementation of this policy.
- ◇ Require Volunteers, Coaches, Club Members, Players, Staff members and Board members to adopt and abide by this policy.
- ◇ Provide and promote access to training and support for Volunteers, Coaches, Club Members, Players, Staff members and Board members to adopt best practice to reduce, prevent, and respond to bullying.
- ◇ Address the needs of children who have experienced bullying behaviour including young people as well as those who have displayed bullying behaviour within a framework of **respect, responsibility, resolution and support**.
- ◇ Respond to any concerns raised including by young people and children who have experienced bullying behaviour.
- ◇ Highlight bullying based on prejudice and perceived differences, to ensure our practices are effective in dealing with these issues.
- ◇ Regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy and guidelines and include children and young people's views in this process.

**We have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and all bullying including prejudice – based language and behaviour is never left unchallenged by adults.**



## Bowls Scotland will commit to:



**Actively developing** positive relationships between young people and adults



**Respond to any concerns raised** - including by people and children who have experienced bullying behaviour.

Clubs should encourage members to come forward and ensure their queries will be dealt with efficiently and effectively. You should report an incident to the Wellbeing and Protection Officer at your club, or a trusted Coach or Adult. Alternatively, you can seek advice from us at Bowls Scotland via our safeguarding email address at [safeguarding@bowlsscotland.com](mailto:safeguarding@bowlsscotland.com)

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For this policy, a child is recognised as someone under the age of 18 years. We believe in the potential of everyone regardless of sex, race, religion or belief, ethnic origin, ability, family structure, socio-economic background, age, nationality, marital, domestic, or civil partnership, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other aspect that makes you who you are. Bowls Scotland recognises the information provided for children by Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service [RespectMe](#) and actively encourages this resource to be used by young people. Bowls Scotland will challenge any bullying that is based on prejudice and treats all bullying behaviour very seriously.

In Scotland, bullying is defined as: Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of 'agency'. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships: it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, and left out. This behaviour happens face to face, verbally (on the phone), written via text message and online. (Respect for All)

Bullying is a behaviour that can make a person feel frightened, threatened, left out and hurt, and is a breach of a child or young person's human rights. Something only must happen once to make a person feel worried or scared to go to their club training or other places, they enjoy going.

Some behaviour may be perceived to be bullying, however could, in fact, be criminal in nature. Understanding the individual circumstances of any incident is important to ensure that there is a clear distinction between bullying and a criminal offence that needs reported to the police.

## **BULLYING BEHAVIOUR CAN INCLUDE:**

**Physical Bullying** - Tripping, hitting, kicking, punching, shoving, any use of violence.

**Verbal Bullying** - Name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening, spreading rumours.

**Emotional Bullying** - Ignoring, leaving out an individual from activities and social acceptance of the peer group, being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. threatening gestures),

**Cyber Bullying** - Sending abusive text, email or instant messages, vindictive posts on all areas of the internet such as social media sites, emails, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of connected technology, i.e. camera and videos.

**Racial bullying** - May occur when a person is treated differently because of their ethnicity, race or culture, e.g. racial taunts, gestures, graffiti.

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## PREVENTION

- Cultivate an ethos whether in clubland or at a competition where there's an anti-bullying culture – it is particularly important that adults are good role models for children in any given situation.
- Encourage all children to speak up and share their concerns.
- Help those being bullied to speak out and tell a coach, the wellbeing and protection officer or an adult they can trust.
- In a club setting the club should have a written policy and a code of conduct, which should outline what is and is not acceptable behaviour for all members within the club, of which this anti-bullying policy is a part of or embedded in.
- All volunteers, staff members, players and parents should sign the code of conduct and the anti-bullying policy, to ensure everyone abides by these strict guidelines.
- Ideally the wellbeing and protection officer should raise awareness about bullying, why it is so important to speak up and what the consequences are of bullying.

## Bowls Scotland Will:



Create an open and welcoming environment



Cultivate an ethos where there's an anti-bullying culture



Help those being bullied to speak out and tell a coach

## Bullying behaviour may become apparent in several ways:

- ✓ Through observation.
- ✓ A child may tell you.
- ✓ A third party may have reported an incident or may have a strong suspicion of an ongoing situation.
- ✓ you may have a suspicion.

It is important to remember that it is your responsibility to act if you have concerns.



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## WHAT TO DO WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL REPORTS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

*Reassure the child being bullied that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing by speaking up.*

**Tell them that you can be trusted and will help them, although you can't promise to keep what you have been told to yourself, but you will only share it with people who need to know so that they can help.**

*Listen to what the child says and take what they say seriously. Make sure you clearly understand what the child has said, especially if they have learning or physical difficulties which may affect their ability to communicate or, if English is not their first language, so you can pass on the information to the appropriate individuals. It is important to communicate with a child or young person for their views and how they could input into the process or what they think would be helpful.*

**Explain what will happen next, and how they are going to be kept informed.**

*If the allegation of bullying involves a coach, Bowls Scotland's Lead Safeguarding Officer must be contacted for advice. The Bowls Scotland [Responding to Concerns procedure](#) should be followed.*

**Be sensitive and use good judgement when it comes to informing parents/carers of those whose negative behaviour is impacting on others. Put the child at the centre – will telling the parents/carers result in more problems for the child?**

*Speak with those being bullied and those displaying bullying behaviour separately.*

**In cases of online/electronic bullying, advise children who are being bullied by text, email or online to retain the communication (screenshot) or to print it out.**

*Talk with the child/children who have been displaying bullying behaviour. Explain the situation and try to get them to understand the consequences of their behaviour.*

**Keep records of what is said i.e. what happened, by whom and when.**

*In some cases, it might be worth considering seeking an apology from those involved in bullying behaviour (for example, where those on the receiving end wish reconciliation). Apologies are only of real value however, when they are genuine.*

**Once you have completed your report, pass this on to the club's wellbeing and protection officer and or named person for action.**

Please note that strategies and solutions do not come in 'one size fits all'. Each case is unique and requires an individual response to the individual situation. What might work in one situation might not work in another. You might have to adopt different strategies before finding one that is effective.



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## What to do when an individual discloses, they are experience bullying?

- ✓ listen in a non-judgemental manner
- ✓ take people seriously when they talk about experience bullying
- ✓ record what has been said on the appropriate incident report form
- ✓ report the issue to your wellbeing and protection officer
- ✓ do not promise to keep the issue a secret or take sole responsibility



## When responding to incidents or accusations of bullying the approach should be to ask the following questions, in line with Respect for All:

- ✓ What was the behaviour?
- ✓ What impact did it have?
- ✓ What does the child or young person want to happen?
- ✓ What do I need to do about it?
- ✓ What attitudes, prejudices or other factors have influenced the behaviour?

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For more information, you can access **Respect for All** via this link:



[The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People 2024](#)

This policy takes into consideration the **Scottish Government** funded anti-bullying policy: respectme, Scotland's **Anti-Bullying Service**, managed in partnership with **SAMH** (Scottish Association for Mental Health), and **LGBT Youth Scotland**.



In cases of serious bullying, the incidents must be referred to our **Lead Safeguarding Officer – Lawra Cox** at

[safeguarding@bowlsscotland.com](mailto:safeguarding@bowlsscotland.com)