



GEORGETOWN SOCCER CLUB ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

At Georgetown Soccer Club (GSC) we are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all our members so they can participate in soccer in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our Club. If bullying does occur, all Club members or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to notify the GSC immediately. This Club is committed to playing its part to teach players to treat each other with respect.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:

Emotional being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding soccer boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)

Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence

Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

Cyberbullying

This is when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger, tweets), to deliberately upset someone. Bullies often feel anonymous and 'distanced' from the incident when it takes place online and bystanders can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding the information on. There is a growing trend for bullying to occur online or via texts - bullies no longer rely on being physically near to the young person.

Trolling

This is the name given to posting deliberately offensive comments on people's social media pages aimed at causing upset and distress. This type of behaviour could result in legal action. GSC commits to ensure our website and/or social networking pages are being used appropriately and any online bullying will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with procedures detailed in this policy.

Why is it important to respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different, more appropriate, ways of behaving. This Club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

All Club members, coaches, officials and parents should understand what bullying is

All Club members, officials and coaching staff should know what the Club policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.

All players and parents should know what the Club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

As a Club we take bullying seriously. Players and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.

Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Indicators

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

says he or she is being bullied

is unwilling to go to Club sessions

becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence

continually feels ill before training sessions

comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged

has possessions go "missing"

asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)

has unexplained cuts or bruises

is frightened to say what's wrong

gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

In more extreme cases:

starts stammering

cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares

becomes aggressive, disruptive, or unreasonable

is bullying other children or siblings

stops eating

attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Bullying as a result of any form of discrimination

Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability. Generally, these forms of bullying look like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include:

Verbal abuse

derogatory remarks about girls or women, suggesting girls and women are inferior to boys and men, or that black, Asian and ethnic minority people are not as capable as white people; spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that someone is inferior and so they are “gay” - for example, “you’re such a gay boy!” or “those trainers are so gay!” Ridiculing someone because of a disability or mental health related issue, or because they have a physical, mental or emotional developmental delay. Referring to someone by the colour of their skin, rather than their name; using nicknames that have racial connotations; isolating someone because they come from another country or social background etc.

Physical abuse

including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault, and threatening behaviour.

Cyberbullying

using online spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. It can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging. Discrimination is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can potentially lead to actions that may cause women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, or people who follow specific religions or beliefs, to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued.

GSC ensures that Club members know that discriminatory language and behaviour will not be tolerated in this Club. If an incident occurs, members should be informed that discriminatory language is offensive, and will not be tolerated. If a member continues to make discriminatory remarks, explain in detail the effects that discrimination and bullying has on people. If it is a young person making the remarks their parents should be informed just as in any breach of the Club Code of Conduct and this Anti-Bullying Policy. If a member makes persistent remarks, they should be removed from the training setting in line with managing challenging behaviour and the Club officials should talk to them in more detail about why their comments are unacceptable. If the problem persists, the member should be made to understand the sanctions that will apply if they continue to use discriminatory language or behaviour. Consider inviting the parents/guardians to the Club to discuss the attitudes of the youth member in line with the procedures detailed in this policy.

Procedures

1. Report Bullying incidents to a member of the Club staff.
2. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.
3. If necessary and appropriate, the OPP will be consulted.
4. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly.
5. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
6. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the Club will initiate disciplinary action under the Club constitution.

Club Action If the Club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they will follow the procedure outlined below:

Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.

If this fails/not appropriate a small panel (made up from VP, Technical Director, Selected individuals from the GSC Board of Directors) should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.

The same persons should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed. If bullying has in their view taken place the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time. In some cases, the parent of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The Club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.

All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

More serious cases may be referred to the OPP.

Prevention

The Club has a Code of Conduct, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part.

All Club members and parents will sign to accept the Code of Conduct upon joining the Club. The Club will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the Club, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

This document will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be updated as required. Where there are any discrepancies between this document and the OS Document the OS Document will take precedence.