

# Scottish Cycling Anti-Bullying Policy

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## Contents

1. Policy Statement.....	2
1.1 Preventative actions .....	2
2. Bullying: a Definition:.....	3
3. When it's not Bullying.....	4
3.1 Attempted Bullying.....	4
3.2 Criminal Behaviour .....	4
3.3 Adult to Child Behaviours .....	4
4. Potential signs of Bullying.....	5
4.1 The person may: .....	5
4.2 In more extreme cases: .....	5
4.3 People who witness Bullying are impacted too and can feel:.....	5
4.4 People who frequently engage in bullying behaviours are more at risk of:.....	6
5. Responding to Bullying:.....	6
5.1 When someone discloses they are experiencing bullying:.....	6
6. Management of bullying .....	6
6.1 Labelling.....	8
7. Recording and monitoring bullying incidents.....	8
8. Review .....	9
9. Actions for clubs.....	9
10. Club anti-bullying policy.....	10
10.1 Scottish Clubs:.....	10
10.2 English and Welsh Clubs:.....	10

## 1. Policy Statement

Scottish Cycling shares the same commitment as British Cycling: they are committed to fostering a caring, friendly and safe environment for everyone involved in cycling so that they can participate in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in cycling. If bullying does occur, all riders, coaches, volunteers or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Scottish Cycling 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. Our Anti-Bullying policy takes into account Respect for All: The national approach to anti-bullying in Scotland and our commitment to the principals of "Getting it Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC).

Scottish Cycling is fully committed to an inclusive environment and rights-based approach within our sport. To that end we recognise and implement the general principals of both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the Equality Act. Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity, and respect the rights of all.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. Scottish Cycling understand that a child's (or adult's) wellbeing can be seriously impacted by bullying behaviour and therefore recognises the information provided by respect *me*, Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service: 'Bullying is never acceptable; it doesn't make a person better or stronger to get through it and it should never be seen as a normal part of growing up/life.'

Scottish Cycling believes that the best approach to tackling bullying is to create a positive culture and ethos of inclusion and take a preventative approach:

### 1.1 Preventative actions

- Take it seriously and investigate
- Know about the anti-bullying plan/policy
- Encourage good behaviours
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour – even small incidents should not go unchallenged
- Champion reporting
- Patrol, manage and know hot-spot locations
- Think about how to stop bullying before it happens
- Ensure everyone is included, engaged and involved and have the opportunity to participate

- Reinforce the positive use of Codes of Conduct
- Encourage and provide training opportunities

This policy applies to all regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, socio-economic status or family circumstance.

## 2. Bullying: a Definition:

Bullying is a behaviour that can make a person feel frightened, threatened, left out and hurt. Something only has to happen once to make a person feel worried or scared to go to their club training or other places they enjoy going.

Bullying is both behavior 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 behavior that can make people feel hurt, threatened and left out. This behavior happens face to face and online. (*Respect for All*)

Bullying is hurtful behaviour, in situations where it's difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves; often carried out where people in a position of power and authority can't see it. It can take many forms, including:

- **Physical** – tripping, hitting, kicking, punching, shoving, any use of violence as well as theft or damage to someone's belonging
- **Verbal** - threats, name-calling, spreading rumours, teasing name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening, spreading rumours
- **Emotional** - ignoring, leaving out an individual from the activities and social acceptance of the peer group, being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding belongings, threatening gestures)
- **Harassment** - making people feel like they are being bullied or fearful of being bullied e.g. using abusive or insulting behaviour in a manner intended to cause alarm or distress
- **Cyber** - sending abusive text, email or instant messages, vindictive posts on all areas of the internet such as social media sites e.g. Facebook or Instagram, nasty messages, emails, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of connected technology, i.e. camera and videos. Cyber Bullying should not be treated any differently from face to face bullying. Cyber Bullying is particularly serious due to the nature in which the abuse occurs. It can be very personal and take place in a closed private format where the victim may feel isolated and the content will not be viewed by parents, friends or siblings. Alternatively it could take place in a public format. It may lead to the victim rereading any material in private.
- **Prejudiced based** - targeting someone because of who they are or are perceived to be: e.g. age, asylum seekers/refugees, body image/Physical appearance, Disability, Gender Identify / Transphobia, Gypsy/Travellers, sexual orientation/homophobic,

looked after young people, Marriage/Civil Partnership, Race/racism, religion or belief, sexism or gender or sectarian using abusive or insulting behaviour in a manner intended to cause alarm or distress

**Bullying takes many forms but ultimately it is the perception of the victim that determines whether or not they are being bullied rather than the intention of the bully.**

## 3. When it's not Bullying

### 3.1 Attempted Bullying

Sometimes attempts to bully can have no obvious or immediate effect. A person can attempt to bully someone using a range of behaviours but it may have no impact – in this case the person has not been bullied but the behaviour needs challenged and recorded appropriately and should not be ignored. For example, the use of homophobic or other derogatory language, which may have no impact on the person it is aimed at, must still be challenged as the language itself is unacceptable, would be a breach of the Code of Conduct and could impact on other people. Some behaviour can be perceived as or assumed to be bullying.

### 3.2 Criminal Behaviour

Certain incidents can often be more serious and be criminal in nature and bullying and this more serious set of criminal behaviours can often overlap. It is important for staff and volunteers to know the difference between bullying and criminal offences such as hate crime, child sexual exploitation and gender based violence such as domestic abuse and sexual assault. For instance, when someone is coerced or pressurised to do something sexual or is touched inappropriately, this is not bullying, this is sexual assault or abuse and a form of gender-based violence. There are laws to protect people from this very serious type of behaviour.

### 3.3 Adult to Child Behaviours

Scottish Cycling believes that adults who behave in a manner that causes distress, hurt or upset to a child eg a parent who pushes too hard, a coach or manager with a 'win at all costs' mentality; can be seen as bullying. The behaviour should also be considered against inappropriate adult to child behaviours that fit into the category of poor practice or abuse, and if that is the case that behaviour should be dealt with via the Scottish Cycling Wellbeing & Protection policy.

## 4. Potential signs of Bullying

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children and adults. A child or adult may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Staff and volunteers should be aware of these possible signs and investigate.

### 4.1 The person may:

- Say they are being bullied
- Become withdrawn, anxious or appears to lack confidence
- Hesitation or reluctance to attend training or other club activities
- Regularly feels ill before training sessions
- Reluctance to work with a certain individual
- Becomes aggressive towards others, disruptive or unreasonable
- Often last one picked for a team or group activity for no apparent reason, or being picked on when they think your back is turned
- Clothing or personal possessions go missing or get damaged
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Believe that there is something wrong with them
- Is frightened to say what is wrong

### 4.2 In more extreme cases:

- Suffer from depression / develop feelings of worthlessness
- Starts to stammer
- Cries themselves to sleep at night, has nightmares or wets the bed
- Stops eating
- Exhibit self-harm behaviours such as cutting, an eating disorder, taking of drugs/alcohol
- Runs away
- Threatens, attempt's or completes suicide

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

### 4.3 People who witness Bullying are impacted too and can feel:

- Powerless

- Fearful
- Guilty

Bullying will not just stop or go away. Bullies can be very cunning and develop strategies to avoid it being seen by anyone but the person they are bullying.

#### 4.4 People who frequently engage in bullying behaviours are more at risk of:

- Dropping out or being asked to leave/excluded
- Engaging in criminal behaviours
- Developing depression or anxiety
- Being abusive to their sexual partners, or spouses or their children as adults

## 5. Responding to Bullying:

Bullying takes place in the context of relationships. Promoting respectful relationships, repairing relationships where appropriate and ensuring we respond to all forms of prejudice will help create an environment where bullying cannot thrive.

#### 5.1 When someone discloses they are experiencing bullying:

- Listen
- Take people seriously when they talk about experiencing bullying
- Record what has been said (on the incident report form)
- Report the incident to the club Wellbeing & Protection Officer
- The club WPO, will use their training, experience and judgment to decide whether to report the issue to the Scottish Cycling Wellbeing & Protection Team, who are also available for advice
- Do not promise to keep the issue a secret, or take sole responsibility

## 6. Management of bullying

Cases of bullying should be resolved with the utmost speed to avoid further distress to the person experiencing the bullying. A supportive approach will be required as a person who has been bullied does not feel in control of the situation and may not feel free to exercise choice. By supporting them to make choices, this helps restore their sense of agency; develop their resilience; and establish positive relationship approaches that they will need to move forward. People need to have choices on how they share and report bullying and bullying concerns.

It is advisable for any bullying behaviour to be dealt with in a similar manner to the below:

- Discuss the potential courses of action with the person, there are a range of strategies that can be used to address bullying:
  - Use of Code of Conduct and a mediated / restorative approach
  - Solution Oriented Approach
  - Disciplinary approach
- Where appropriate parents/carers should be informed and asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem with the rider present
- Where appropriate and the bullied rider consents, police may be consulted
- The bullying behaviour must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
- If mediation or behaviour management fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution, or where appropriate under Scottish Cycling/ British Cycling's Disciplinary Procedures

**Remember:** Adults have a right to self-determination and must consent to any actions taken

Which strategy to use should be discussed with the individual and their views and thoughts taken into account, every person is different and it is important that while inappropriate behaviour is challenged and dealt with that the person experiencing that via this process has a voice and starts to re-gain the sense of control over their situation that was lost as part of the bullying cycle.

To help create an action plan to deal with bullying, consider the following questions:

- 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?

People who are exhibiting bullying behaviour will need help and support to:

- Identify the feelings that cause them to act this way
- Develop alternative ways of responding to these feelings
- Understand the impact of their behaviour on other people
- Repair relationships

We need to help people who demonstrate bullying behaviour by:

- Providing clear expectations about behaviour – clear reference to Codes of Conduct
- Providing a range of ways to respond eg taking steps to repair a relationship, and where appropriate, supporting them to make amends.

- Challenge prejudice and offer the opportunity to learn and change behaviour.
- Consideration should be given to any factors that may impact upon a person's wellbeing, including whether any additional support for learning is required.

## 6.1 Labelling

Labelling people as 'bullies' or 'victims' can be disempowering and unhelpful in changing their behaviour or supporting their recovery from being bullied, labelling an action as bullying is a more effective way of motivating a person to change their bullying behaviour.

Staff & volunteers dealing with bullying behaviours are expected to be able to distinguish between a person and their behaviour. Any bullying behaviour must be challenged, however, all people (including those causing bullying) should always be treated with respect. This does not diminish the seriousness nor impact of bullying behaviour; rather, it is an essential way of maintaining the staff/volunteer's focus and response on the behaviour that is problematic. This is a solution-oriented approach that is designed to help people change the way they behave without being stigmatised. Staff and volunteers, rather than labelling them, can help people change by telling them that the behaviour is bullying and that what they did is not acceptable.

Scottish Cycling sets high standards of conduct for all its members which are set out in our Codes of Conduct, a breach of these expectations should be handled through the clubs Disciplinary Procedures.

## 7. Recording and monitoring bullying incidents

Accurate recording of bullying incidents ensures that an appropriate response has taken place. It is crucial to enable monitoring of the effectiveness of policy and practice, and use that information to review and update this policy on a regular basis.

Monitoring bullying incidents is essential and helps identify recurring patterns, enabling early intervention. When recording incidents:

- Record on the Incident report form
- Who was involved in the incident, as well as staff or volunteers
- Where and when bullying has taken place
- The type of bullying experienced, e.g. name-calling, rumours, threats etc.
- Any underlying prejudice including details of any protected characteristic(s)
- Consideration of personal or additional support needs and wellbeing concerns and
- Actions taken including resolution at an individual or organisational level.



## 8. Review

This Policy will be regularly reviewed and will include member's both adult and children and their parents/carers participation and feedback on the content and actual experience of implementation as part of the review:

- In accordance with changes in guidance on anti-bullying or following any changes within Scottish Cycling
- Following any issue or concern raised about bullying within Scottish Cycling
- In all other circumstances, at least every three years

## 9. Actions for clubs

In order to prevent, reduce and respond effectively to bullying behaviour Scottish Cycling recommends all clubs should implement this policy through:

- All committee members, coaches, riders and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is and what they should do if bullying arises
- All committee members and coaches should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
- Clubs should take bullying seriously. Riders and parents/carers should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported
- Bullying will not be tolerated
- Respecting the rights of individuals is paramount
- Working together to develop positive relationships amongst club members which are mutually respectful, responsible and trusting; and promote their emotional health and wellbeing
- Training, supporting and supervising athletes, parents/carers, coaches and volunteers to adopt best practice to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying
- Addressing the needs of those who are bullied as well as those who bully within a framework of respect, responsibility, resolution and support
- Responding to any concerns raised either in the experiences of people of poor practice/misconduct or abuse caused by another's bullying behaviour
- Highlighting bullying based on prejudice and perceived differences, to ensure practices are effective in dealing with these issues
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the anti-bullying policy and guidelines and include member's views in this process
- It is essential that all committee members, coaches, athletes, volunteer and parents/carers are aware of the anti-bullying policy

## 10. Club anti-bullying policy

Scottish Cycling & British Cycling advise clubs to adopt an anti-bullying policy. Guides to writing an anti-bullying policy are available as follows:

### 10.1 Scottish Clubs:

*Respect Me* – <https://respectme.org.uk/resources/publications/> The policy creation guide contains a check list and is provided volunteer organisations working with children as well as schools and can be applied in the club environment.

- For information on bullying Respect me can be contacted on 0844 800 8600 and [enquire@respectme.org.uk](mailto:enquire@respectme.org.uk)
- Parent Line (children 1<sup>st</sup> service) 08000 28 22 33
- Parent line is open 7 days a week: Mon-Fri 9am-9pm, Sat-Sun 9am-12pm

### 10.2 English and Welsh Clubs:

*Kidscape* is available at <http://www.kidscape.org.uk> This policy creation check list is provided to schools and can be applied in the club environment.

- For information on bullying Kidscape can be contacted on 0207 730 3300.
- Kidscapes- anti-bullying help line for parents and children is 08451 205 204