

Anti-Bullying Policy

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members so they can play tennis in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

We operate a zero tolerance approach to bullying. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all members and/or parents should report the incident and be assured that it will be dealt with seriously, efficiently and appropriately.

Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. All members have a duty to prevent and stop it.

Objectives of this Policy

This policy has been developed using the LTA Club Anti-Bullying Policy Template. Its purpose is to:



- To inform the club and its associates about bullying and our position
- To know how to report bullying
- To understand how the club will respond and take appropriate action to reports of bullying
- To signpost to appropriate third-party resources that support victims of bullying
- To assure all members and parents who report and/or are victims of bullying at the club will be appropriately supported
- To provide the club with transparency on the prevention process

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression verbally or physically, with the intention of hurting another person physically or mentally. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be carried out by children or adults.

Bullying can have lots of different forms, including but not limited to:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding racquets/other equipment), threatening gestures, excluding a person from a tennis session
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic – because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

Bullying behaviour can include (but is not limited to):

- Being called unwelcome, inappropriate or abusive names.
- Being threatened physically or mentally
- Being excluded from tennis session
- Being ignored by a group of members
- Being treated in such a way that you leave the club with negative feeling (e.g. upset, crying)
- Being pressured to give someone your money or your things
- Being hit or pushed
- Having your possessions damaged or broken
- Someone spreading rumours about you and/or your family
- Someone making defamatory comments about you and/or your family
- Someone posting online and/or sharing hurtful comments or pictures (e.g. WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.)

How to spot if someone is being bullied?

A child or adult might show that he or she is being bullied in lots of ways. Not limited to but including;

- Says that he or she is being bullied
- Has trouble sleeping
- Is unwilling to go to or stops attending club sessions
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Cries either at the club or away from the club about an incident
- Feels ill before training sessions
- Comes home with torn/damaged clothes or damaged equipment

- Has possessions “go missing”
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what’s wrong
- Gives unlikely explanations for any of the above

In more extreme cases signs can include but not limited to;

- Starts stuttering
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating or runs away
- Attempts or threatens suicide

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

How to report bullying

If you are being bullied, think you may be being bullied or if you see / hear it happening to someone else, it should be reported immediately.

You should tell the Club Welfare and Safeguarding Officer (Lorraine Oakley, Chair) a member of the committee and/or phone the LTA Safeguarding Team.

How the club will respond to reports of bullying

- The club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying
- The club will consult with the LTA, if appropriate
- The report of bullying will be investigated
- Disciplinary action under Section 7 of the Club Rules will be taken, if appropriate
- For minors, parents will be informed and asked to attend a meeting to discuss the report. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.

How we will work with the bully and the victim

If we decide (if necessary, after receiving advice from the LTA) that it is appropriate for us to deal with the situation, we will follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Where the victim is comfortable to do so and the bullying has not continued and/escalated, reconciliation will be attempted by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails, or is not appropriate, a small panel made up of at least three members from the committee (two of which should be officers of the club) will meet with the member or the parent and child that are reported they have been bullied to get details of the allegation. Minutes will be taken for clarity, and agreed. Any committee member accused of bullying or with a connection to the alleged bully will be excluded from this meeting.
3. The same panel will meet with the alleged bully and parents if applicable and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes will be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has, in the view of the panel, taken place, the panel will consider whether it is serious enough to take disciplinary action immediately under the club’s procedures under section 7 of current club rules.
5. If disciplinary action is not taken immediately, the member should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e., temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
6. All coaches involved with both players should be made aware of the concerns and outcomes of the process.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying players under 18:

1. The club will contact the LTA for advice on the action to be taken. Bullying by an adult is child abuse and allegations will be treated very seriously.
2. In most cases in which adults are found to have bullied children, child protection awareness training is the minimum likely outcome. Serious disciplinary action by the club and/or the LTA could also be taken.
3. More serious cases may be referred to statutory services such as the police or social services. We will consult statutory services at an early stage if required.

Prevention

It is the club’s aim to prevent any form of bullying. The club is developing a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part.

When it has been developed, all players and parents will sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club. Existing members will be made aware of the new constitution.

Useful Resources

- NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000
- LTA Safe and Inclusive Team 0208487000/
safeandinclusive@lta.org.uk(Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
- Childline 0800 1111 / www.childline.org.uk
- Kidscape www.kidscape.org.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance www.antibullyingalliance.org

Anti-Bullying Policy SVLTC V3