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Every child and adult have the right to participate in the activities offered free from the fear of bullying.

Bullying may be seen as deliberately hurtful behavior, usually repeated over a period where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. Bullying has the potential to cause permanent harm (physical, emotional or psychological).

Clubs should take steps to prevent bullying behaviour wherever possible and respond to the incidents when they occur. A preventative approach means that sport is playing its part in creating an environment and society in which people treat each other with respect.

Bullying can take the form of:

- Verbal: name calling, teasing threatening, spreading rumors, sarcasm, racist taunts, homophobic bullying, graffiti, and gestures
- Physical: hitting, kicking, punching, spitting, stealing / breaking belongings
- Emotional: ignoring, hurtful emails / text messages, excluding from activities, tormenting, ridiculing, and humiliating

Although anyone can be the target of bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive, and anxious or insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons – being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith, or culture.

Bullies come from all social classes; they bully for a variety of varied reasons and may even have been bullied or abused themselves. Typically, bullies can have low self-esteem, be excitable, aggressive, or jealous. Crucially, they learned how to gain power over others.

Identifying Bullying

The following are examples of bullying within the Martial Arts environment: a parent who pushes too hard, an instructor who adopts a 'Win-at-all-costs' philosophy, a student who intimidates, an official who places unfair pressure on a person, a spectator who shouts abuse.

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The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It Can cause considerable distress to children, young people and vulnerable adults, and affect their health and development. In Extreme cases, it can lead to self-harm and / or Suicide,

There are several signs that may indicate a person is being bullied:

- Sudden Reluctance to go to activities such as training or games that they used to enjoy or a drop-off in performance/ attendance
- Regularly feeling ill before training activity
- Physical signs such as stomach-aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bedwetting
- Scratching and bruising, coming home with damaged equipment or clothes.
- Behavioral changes such as becoming withdrawn, anxious, clingy & depressed.
- Tearful, aggressive, unreasonable
- Start Bullying others, a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions
- In more extreme cases, they might stop eating, start stammering, cry themselves to sleep.
- Have nightmares, run away or threaten / attempt suicide

These signs may indicate other problems or be a reaction to other events in a child or young person's life, but the possibility of bullying should be considered.

Action to Help the Victim and Prevent Bullying

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously
- Encourage all children to speak and share concerns. Help the victim to speak out and tell the person in charge / some in authority. Create an open environment.
- Investigate all allegations and act to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the Bully(ies) separately.
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them
- Keep Records of all conversations (what happened, by whom, when)
- Keep a written record of any actions taken
- Report any concern of the designated safeguarding officer.

Useful Websites:

www.beatbullying.org <https://www.stopbullying.gov> www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk

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