



## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY FOR CLUBS AFFILIATED TO ANICC**

### **Statement of Intent**

ANICC is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all competitors, volunteers or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club safeguarding officer or any committee member.

### **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 or social media messages, tormenting, (e.g. hiding spikes/clothing, threatening gestures)
- 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 focusing on the issue of, sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

### **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. Athletes who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

ANICC has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All committee members, coaches, competitors, volunteers, parents and club members should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All committee members, volunteers and coaches should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All competitors, volunteers and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

- As a governing body, ANICC take bullying seriously. Competitors, volunteers and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

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 s/he is being bullied
- is unwilling to go to club sessions
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- feels ill before training sessions
- comes home with clothes torn or athletics equipment damaged
- 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 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

### **Procedures**

1. Report bullying incidents to the club child safeguarding officer or a member of the committee .
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to ANICC Designated Child Safeguarding Officer for advice
3. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour
7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

### **Recommended club action**

If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation they should follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together following agreement by both parties. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails or is not appropriate a small panel (comprising chairman, Club Child Safeguarding Officer, Secretary, committee members) should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Confidential minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same 3 persons should meet with the alleged person who has instigated bullying and their parent/s (if under 18) and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Confidential minutes should again be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has in their view taken place then a warning should be issued 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.
5. In some cases the parent of the child who has instigated bullying or bullied 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.
6. All officials involved with both should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

#### **In the case of adults reported to be bullying athletes under 18**

1. ANICC should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken
2. In minor cases where the allegation is made regarding an official then child protection awareness training may be recommended.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the police, social services or ANICC complaints procedure.

#### **Prevention:**

- The club will have written codes of conduct for young people/ parents and officials, which includes what is acceptable and proper behavior for all members of which the anti bullying policy is one part.
- All relevant parties will sign to accept the codes of conduct upon joining the club.
- The club child safeguarding officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with athletes to discuss the issue openly and constructively