

### **3.2.3 Oundle Tennis Club Anti-bullying Policy**

#### **Statement of Intent**

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. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all players or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club child protection officer or a member of the committee.

#### **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 racquets/other equipment, 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 focussing 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. Players who are bullying need to learn a different way of behaving.

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

#### **Objectives of this Policy**

- All committee members, coaches and teachers players and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All committee members, teaching 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 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 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- Becomes withdrawn anxious or lacking in confidence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 damaged or tennis 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 or has nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- attempt or threatens suicide or runs away

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

### **Procedures**

1. Report bullying incidents to the club child protection officer or a member of committee

2. In cases of serious bullying, the cases will be referred to the LTA 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, the police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and 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.

### **Club Action**

If the club decides it is appropriate for us to deal with the situation we will follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/is not appropriate a small panel (Made up from Chairman, Child Protection Officer, Secretary, Committee members) will meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes will be taken for clarity, and these should be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same three persons will meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minute's will be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has, in our view, taken place the player will be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration will be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
5. In some cases the parent of the bully or bullied player may be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club committee will monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
6. All coaches involved with both players will be made aware of the concerns and outcomes of the process i.e. the warning.

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

1. The LTA will always be informed and will advise on action to be taken.
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where an allegation is made regarding a teacher or coach, child protection awareness training may be recommended.
3. More serious cases may be referred to statutory services such as the police or social services.

### **Prevention**

- The club has a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti bullying policy is one part.
- All players and parents will sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club.
- The club child protection officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with players to discuss the issue openly and constructively

This policy is based on that provided to schools by KIDSCAPE.  
KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying. **KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300**