



YOUNG MUNSTER RFC ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Statement of Intent:

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members so they can participate in Rugby in a relaxed atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our Club.

If bullying does occur, all club members or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the IRFU, Young Munster RFC has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the Club's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures of the IRFU and National Safeguarding policy of the IRFU.

The club recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives and enjoyment of players and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour by encouraging a

A positive club culture and climate which does the following:

- Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
- Encourages players to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying. Behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
- Promotes respectful relationships across the whole club community.
- Has a club-wide approach and a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact on our club
- Effective supervision and monitoring of players
- Supports for coaches and players.
- Has an on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

What is Bullying?

Definition: 'Bullying is the repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others.' (Dept. of Education)

Bullying can take many forms, but its aim is always to make a person feel upset, intimidated or afraid.

Most common forms of Bullying are:

Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.

Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

Emotional - making threats, spreading rumours, excluding, ignoring etc...

Non-verbal - making suggestive, provocative or intimidating gestures.

E-bullying - sending threatening or upsetting messages or images via social media.

Personal Property – threats against or damage to a person's property.

Bullying can occur between:

Child to child - physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, damage to property and isolation.

Adult to child - includes the repeated use of gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature by an individual child or group of children.

Bullying will continue in a culture that assumes name-calling, exclusion, teasing and other similar behaviours are acceptable, part of 'growing up or a man-up' approach. This is never a pleasurable experience and is especially unwelcome for young people who may not have developed the emotional maturity to put the behaviour into context or have the tools to cope with it. Young people are often embarrassed to share their concerns with others and often need adults to be their voice in such circumstances.

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. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. This Club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this policy:

All members, officials, coaching staff, players and parents should have an understanding of bullying and what it means.

All members, officials, coaching staff, players and parents should know what the Club policy is on Bullying and follow it when bullying is reported. All can be assured that they will be

supported when bullying is reported.
To publicly state that Bullying WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

Preventing Bullying:

Having a proactive approach can prevent bullying from occurring within the club.

The club embraces the IRFU Child Welfare Policy through affiliation to the IRFU, our National Governing Body; this includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-Bullying policy is one part. All those involved with under 18's (Age Grade) players are required to sign the Declaration of Intent Form.

The Club Child Welfare Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues arise in the club, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

We are committed to:

Ensuring the safety and security of all players – good supervision numbers make it hard for bullying behaviour to go unnoticed.

Encouraging an awareness of what bullying is and how to avoid it.

We have the anti-bullying statement visible within the club and ensure the Club Welfare Officer, coaches and other volunteers remind players and coaches of their Codes of Conduct.

We have established Codes of Conduct which are communicated to all parents, coaches and players and are available on the club website.

We encourage young people to contribute to the rules about behaviour and reinforce anti-bullying messages by adults leading by example in their behaviour.

Encourage a 'permission to share' culture that allows Age Grade Players to raise their concerns.

We strive to encourage a mature and measured attitude towards bullying so that Age Grade Players know how to respond effectively.

Bullying should and is in Young Munster RFC always considered in conjunction with the Codes of Conduct.

Pool practice will always be tackled early.

Warnings are given and the case of Age Grade Players especially, these are a chance for them to adjust their behaviour.

We encourage the group to come forward with any future concerns – this will reinforce the message that bullying in whatever form is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

We do this on the understanding that persistent poor practice may escalate into severe bullying if allowed to go unchecked.

Signs and Indicators of Bullying:

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied.

Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- Says he or she is being bullied.
- Is unwilling to go to club sessions.
- Becomes withdrawn anxious or lacking confidence.
- Feels ill before training sessions.
- Comes home with clothes torn or training kit damaged.
- Has possessions go 'missing'.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the 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:

1. Starts stammering.
2. Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares.
3. becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
4. Is bullying other children or siblings.
5. Stops eating.
6. 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

Responding to a bullying report.

When bullying arises within a group situation, use the no-blame approach.

1. Assure the victim that nothing is wrong with them and it is not their fault.
2. Talk with the person alleged to be bullying another person, explain the situation, and try to get the 'bully(ies)' to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
3. Encourage and support the bully (ies) to change behaviour by asking open questions for example:

Question: Tell me what happened?

Question: What were you thinking that led you to behave that way?

Question: Can you tell me how that person has been affected by what you have done?

Question: Can you tell me how that person has been affected by your behaviour?

Question: What do you think you need to do to make things right?

If the club decides that it is appropriate to deal with the situation the following procedure will be followed:

Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that an apology solves the problem.

If this fails/not appropriate, a panel of 3 members, appointed by the Executive committee, should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.

The same panel should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.

If bullying has, in their view, taken place the individual should be warned 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.

In some cases the parent of the bully or bullied player 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.

All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

Report bullying incidents to the Child Welfare Officer or a member of the clubs committee.

In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the Leinster Branch and the IRFU (NGB)

Parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.

If necessary and appropriate, the HSE and/or an Garda Siochana will be consulted.

The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.

An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the Club constitution.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the club who is under 19 (Youth & Minis):

The Club's Child Welfare Officer will always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate. It is anticipated that in all cases where the allegation is made regarding a coach, team manager, club official the Munster Branch Spirit-of-rugby-officer

Emily O' leary and IRFU National Child Welfare Officers will be informed.

More serious cases may be referred to H.S.E. and/or an Garda Siochana.

CHILD WELFARE OFFICER

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