

# Irish Table Tennis Association Ltd

## ULSTER BRANCH



### Anti-Bullying Policy

#### Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our members and staff so they can participate in our sport in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, everyone 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 report it to an appropriate person. Whilst most incidents of bullying will involve children, there may be instances where members of staff or other adults may feel bullied, and we will treat any such incidents seriously.

#### 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, tormenting (e.g hiding books, 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, shouting
- Cyber – All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse, Mobile phone threats by text messaging & calls, Misuse of associated technology i.e camera and video facilities.

## **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. Persons who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. We have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## **Objectives of this Policy**

- All clubs, coaches, officials, members and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All involved should know what the policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- We take bullying seriously. Everyone should be assured that they will 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:

- Doesn't want to continue participating in sport
- Changes to his/her usual routine
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received.

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

## **Procedures**

1. Report bullying incidents to an appropriate person
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by the appropriate person
3. In serious cases, parents should be informed and will be asked to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. Bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully or bullies change their behaviour

## **Outcomes**

1. the bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
2. In serious cases, exclusion from participating in the sport will be considered
3. After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure that repeated bullying does not take place.

## **Prevention**

We expect all activities for children in Table Tennis to be properly supervised by responsible adults who have appropriate training. If all activities are conducted in an open manner, respecting all Child Protection policies, then the likelihood of incidents of bullying can be reduced. All participants should be alert to possible bullying.