



Affiliated To Bowls England

Anti-Bullying Policy

Everyone has the right to experience and enjoy sport in a safe environment, free from abuse and bullying. As in most environments, bullying can and does happen in sport and occasionally in Bowls. Sports organisations play an important role in creating a positive ethos and culture that challenges it.

Within lawn bowls there is a commitment to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all bowlers so they can take part in a relaxed and secure atmosphere regardless of their background or circumstance. Quite simply, bullying of any kind is unacceptable in bowls.

If bullying does occur, members of the bowls community should have confidence that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who believes bullying is happening, is expected to raise their concerns with the Club Safeguarding Officer without delay.

What is bullying?

Bullying is the use of force, coercion, hurtful teasing, or threat, to abuse, aggressively dominate or intimidate. The behaviour is often repeated and habitual, rather than just a one-off occurrence.

There is typically an imbalance of physical or social power. This imbalance distinguishes bullying from conflict. The dynamics of bullying can be more complex than the basic idea of a bully and a victim.

Bullying can be:

- Verbal
- Emotional
- Physical
- Racist
- Ageist
- Sexual
- Sexist
- Homophobic and biphobic
- Transphobic
- Cyber-bullying

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. Bowlers 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 members, coaches, volunteers, officials, and parents/carers should understand what bullying is and that it won't be tolerated in lawn bowls.

- All members, coaches, volunteers, officials, and parents/carers should know what to do if they witness or experience bullying within the sport.
- Anyone involved in lawn bowls should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club Safeguarding Officer, a member of the Club Committee or an adult you can trust.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the Bowls England Lead Safeguarding Officer for advice.
3. In all cases affecting children, parents/carers of alleged victims should be informed.
4. If necessary and appropriate, the victim might consult the police. Laws concerning harassment, online behaviour, hate crime, use of violence and discriminatory behaviour may be relevant.
5. The bullying behaviour will be investigated with the intention of stopping the bullying quickly.
6. The victim should be provided with information about support agencies and helplines.
7. An attempt will be made to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour.
8. Mediation should be the first option considered if both/all involved are willing to participate.
9. If mediation fails and the bullying continues, disciplinary action can be taken under Regulation 9.

Recommended Club Action

If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, after consultation with Bowls Oxfordshire they should follow the procedure outlined below:

1. A meeting should be arranged, in strict confidence, with the person making the allegation (including their parents if under 18) to obtain more information. This will normally include the Club Safeguarding Officer. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account. The person making the report can, if they are 18 or over, request that they are accompanied by a friend, carer or relative. The meeting should clarify the victim's preferred actions which could include:
 - a. Support for them but no actions against the alleged perpetrator(s) – they may fear reprisal.
 - b. Mediation, and if mediation fails, disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator(s).
2. In the case of mediation, the alleged perpetrator (with their parent/s if under 18) should be informed in detail of the allegation, provided with an opportunity to comment on the claim and advised that mediation should be the next step.
3. A mediation meeting should be set up within a reasonable time scale. A trained mediator might be considered. Clubs can canvass members to see if anyone has experience from their work e.g., some current or former police officers, teachers, social workers, HR professionals etc. may have undergone mediation training.

4. Following a successful mediation meeting, a written agreement should be confirmed by all parties and the club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not repeated and that there is no retaliatory behaviour.

5. If appropriate coaches, volunteers, or team managers involved with both individuals might be made aware of the situation and desired outcomes as part of the monitoring of the resolution. Please bear in mind the information sharing guidance found here.

6. If mediation does not produce an appropriate resolution, then disciplinary action can be taken under Regulation 9.

Prevention

Bowls Clubs will have a written constitution, which clearly adopts all policies and guidelines approved by Bowls England. The Club Safeguarding Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters.

Signs and Symptoms for spotting bullying with children

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:

- 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 possessions damaged or missing
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- is bullying other children or siblings
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone

In more extreme cases:

- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- becomes aggressive, disruptive, or unreasonable
- stops eating
- runs away or attempts or threatens suicide

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

Signs and Symptoms for spotting bullying with adults

Adult bullying is on the rise. The difference when dealing with adults, is that you cannot investigate or action unless you have the permission of the victim. This does not prevent your club from trying to implement a safe and welcoming environment, with a clear structure of who the victim can approach for help.

The below are some possible signs of bullying with adults:

- Loneliness – adults being excluded from groups of cliques
- Embarrassment – being socially undermined or talked down in front of others
- Humiliation – inappropriate jokes
- Plagiarism – having ideas deliberately stolen without credit
- Abuse of power – Hierarchical structures in clubs
- Physical harm – to belongings or to own safety

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

Anti-Bullying Support Organisations

Further external support is available, if required from the following sources:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance
- Bullying UK
- Childline
- Family Lives
- National Bullying Helpline
- Samaritans