



Yeovil Town F.C. Child specific bullying policy to supplement section in the Safeguarding policy, following the FA's Guidance.

**Statement of Intent** We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our young players, so they can participate in football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our Yeovil Town Football Club, (YTFC,). If bullying does occur, all parties associated with the Club (parents, players, officials,) should be able to inform on bullying and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to report this to the relevant Safeguarding Officer. This club is committed to playing its part to teach players to treat each other with respect.

**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 football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Discrimination comments, jokes about disabled people, sexist comments,
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

**Cyberbullying**

YTFC Club commits to ensure our website websites and/or social networking pages are being used appropriately and any online bullying will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with procedures detailed in this policy.

**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.

## Objectives of this Policy

To give an understanding of what constitutes bullying.

What is the club's policy on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.

- All players and parents should know where to find the club's policy 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 Indicators 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 or she 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 training equipment damaged
- has possessions go "missing"

**Bullying via Social Media:** This is when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger, tweets), to deliberately upset someone.

Bullies often feel anonymous and 'distanced' from the incident when it takes place online and 'bystanders' can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding the information on. There is a growing trend for bullying to occur online or via texts – bullies no longer rely on being physically near to the young person.

This is the name given to posting deliberately offensive comments on people's social media pages aimed at causing upset and distress. This type of behaviour could result in legal action.

Sexting is also a potential way to bully, embarrass and hurt. Any such incidents will be reported to the Police and other relevant authorities straight away.

Any trolling activities will be reported to the police and relevant authorities.

**Other indicators of bullying**

- 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.

The more extreme signs:

- 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.

#### Bullying as a result of, any form of discrimination

Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability.

Generally, these forms of bullying look like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include:

- Verbal abuse – derogatory remarks about girls or women, suggesting girls and women are inferior to boys and men, or that black, Asian and ethnic minority people are not as capable as white people; spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that something or someone is inferior and so they are “gay” – for example, “you’re such a gay boy!” or “those trainers are so gay!”

Ridiculing someone because of a disability or mental health related issue, or because they have a physical, mental or emotional developmental delay. Referring to someone by the colour of their skin, rather than their name; using nicknames that have racial connotations; isolating someone because they come from another country or social background etc.

- Physical abuse – including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault, and threatening behaviour.
- Cyberbullying – using online spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. It can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging.

Discrimination is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can potentially lead to actions that may cause women, ethnic minorities,

disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, or people who follow specific religions or beliefs, to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued.

YTFC will ensure that staff and players know that discriminatory language and behaviour will not be tolerated in this club.

- If an incident occurs, those involved should be informed that discriminatory language will not be tolerated. If it is a young person making the remarks their parents should be informed just as in any breach of the clubs Code of Conduct and this Anti-Bullying policy.
- If staff or a player makes persistent remarks, they should be removed from the training setting.
- If the problem persists, the staff member or player should be made to understand the sanctions that will apply if they continue to use discriminatory language or behaviour.
- Consider inviting the parents/carers to the club to discuss the attitudes of the player in line with the procedures detailed in this policy.

#### **Procedures**

1. Safeguarding Officer/s informed who will keep the Club's Chief Operating Officer informed on behalf of the Board.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred The FA Case Management Team
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 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.

#### **Anti-Bullying Policy for YTFC 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. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/not appropriate the safeguarding Officer / small panel of club officials should meet with the parent and child who are alleging bullying, to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.

**3. The safeguarding Officer /the same 3 persons 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.**

**4. 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.**

**5. 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 should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.**

**6. All coaches involved with both individuals 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 anyone within the club under 18 the following process needs to be followed:**

**1. The FA will advise on action to be taken where appropriate, this may include action by The FA Safeguarding Team.**

**2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation FA's Safeguarding Children Education Programme may be recommended.**

**3. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Social Care.**

**Prevention:**

- **The club will have a written Safeguarding Statement of Intent, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of which the anti-bullying policy is one part.**
- **All club players and parents will sign to accept the respective Codes of Conduct upon joining the club.**
- **bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, the club will always consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.**

**This policy is based on guidance provided to schools by KIDSCAPE. KIDSCAPE is a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying. KIDSCAPE can be contacted on 0207 730 3300 or you can access their website via [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)**

**You may also wish to access any of the following websites designed to give advice and guidance to parents and children who are faced with bullying: Guidance for parents/carers [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/) [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk) [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk) Guidance for young people [www.youngstonewall.org.uk/](http://www.youngstonewall.org.uk/) [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**

**We would like to thank the ASA who have shared their Anti Bullying Policy for Clubs and to Stonewall's guidance from which this recommended FA Club Anti Bullying Policy has been developed.**