



**Policy number:**      **Appendix 6 to Policy 2a Safeguarding Policy**

**Policy Name:**        **Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedure**

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# **1. Overview**

## **1.1 Purpose of Policy**

Squash Ireland wants to ensure that we operate our sport free from the threat of any form of bullying. Bullying will not be tolerated and will be dealt with, in the case of young people, under either the procedure below or, in the case of all others, under Policy 11 Grievance, Complaints and Disciplinary Policy. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that bullying is tackled and not accepted.

## **1.2 Scope of Policy**

This policy applies to all Squash Ireland members, volunteers, coaches, referees, employees and those that engage in our sport at all levels. It is the responsibility of everyone who is involved with Squash Ireland to adhere to this policy and to help promote Squash Ireland as a safe, enjoyable place for all to participate.

# **2. Bullying**

## **2.1 What is Bullying**

Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others which could be reasonably regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity, but a once off incident is not considered to be bullying.

Bullying can take many forms and can sometimes be hard to recognise, particularly by persons other than the victim. However, the following are some common examples of behaviour which can constitute bullying, and which are prohibited by Squash Ireland;

- a) physical abuse or threats of abuse;
- b) physical contact ranging from unwanted touching to serious assault;
- c) staring, leering, intimidation, aggressive gestures, etc;
- d) manipulation of the victim's reputation by rumour, gossip and ridicule;
- e) menacing behaviour;
- f) shouting or swearing at members both publicly or in private;

- g) exclusion or isolation with negative consequences;
- h) insulting someone's appearance or name calling;
- i) social exclusion or isolation;
- j) use of any social media platform or technology to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another individual;
- k) sneering; and/or
- l) shouting someone down in a meeting (either physically or virtually).

The above is by no means an exhaustive list and bullying can manifest itself in many other forms.

If members feel that they are being bullied, they are urged to air their concerns as soon as possible and in accordance with Policy 11 Grievance, Complaints and Disciplinary Policy.

## **2.2 What is not Bullying?**

It is important to distinguish bullying from other inappropriate behaviours or indeed appropriate engagement. As set out in the definition above, a once-off incident of bullying behaviour may be an affront to dignity and may be unsettling but does not of itself make for an adequate level of distress, as to fall within the definition of bullying and other remedies should be sought for these scenarios. As a once-off, such behaviours cannot be presumed to be done in a targeted, purposeful and unremitting way.

Apart from once-off behaviours, other on-going behaviours which may upset or unsettle a person may not come within the bullying definition either. Behaviour considered bullying by one person may be considered routine interaction by another, so the 'reasonableness' of behaviours over time must be considered. The following is not considered to be bullying behaviour:

- a) strongly expressing differences of opinion;
- b) offering constructive feedback, guidance or advice about behaviour which is not itself welcome; and/or
- c) conflict where members disagree or disregard the other's point of view.

## **3. Procedures for how to deal with bullying behaviour involving young people**

Young people should be encouraged to talk to a trusted person if they are worried about bullying behaviour.

There are generally two ways to deal with bullying behaviour between young people: immediately as an issue happens or after an issue has happened.

### **3.1 Immediately as an issue happens**

#### **a) Where bullying behaviour involves an adult bullying a child**

A Squash Ireland member who is in charge at the time of any alleged acts of bullying should ask to speak with the adult separately, away from any children or other adults. The person in charge should describe the type of behaviour witnessed and the effect it is having on others, especially young people, referring to this policy as a reminder about acceptable behaviour. The adult should be asked to stop such behaviour. If the behaviour is denied or does not change, the person in charge may need to issue an immediate sanction to protect the child/children involved and/or others.

#### **b) Where bullying behaviour involves children (under 18s)**

The person in charge should talk with all the people involved in bullying behaviour as soon as they become aware of the issue and try to reach an agreement about what happened between those involved, referring to this policy as a reminder about acceptable behaviour. An immediate sanction may be necessary to deal with the bullying behaviour.

Parents and the Children's Officer should be informed of the issue by the person in charge and the way it was dealt with, including any action necessary if the behaviour continues. It is better to sort issues immediately and quickly and Squash Ireland expect parents and adults to be supportive of this process. The person in charge should also observe the group/individuals to ensure the bullying behaviour does not continue.

The person in charge may also request that the matter be dealt with under Policy 11 Grievance, Complaints and Disciplinary Policy, if appropriate.

Where a concern about the protection of children arises, it should be reported to the Clubs Designated Liaison Person or the Clubs Children's Officer. The Squash Ireland Child Protection Officer can also provide advice in this regard.

## **3.2 After an issue happens**

This process can be used when the person in charge becomes aware of the behaviour after the incidents occur or if the immediate resolution does not resolve the issue straight away.

### **a) Where bullying behaviour involves an adult**

The behaviour of an adult may be dealt with through an informal complaints process. However, where a young person is involved, the Children's Officer should talk with the child and parent to find out what happened. The Children's Officer role is to support children in ensuring these matters are dealt with appropriately. An informal process is preferable to the formal process, where a resolution can be reached to the benefit of any children involved.

### **b) Where bullying behaviour involves children only (under 18s)**

If an issue has not been resolved or continues after an attempt to resolve the behaviour at the time, or a report is received after an event, the information should be passed to the Children's Officer. Often it will require a coach or other person in charge, e.g. a team manager and the Children's Officer to work together to resolve an issue.

The Children's Officer will need to know who is involved i.e. the person or group who have allegedly behaved in a bullying manner, the target of the behaviour and any others who may have been present at the time, i.e. the bystanders.

The bullying behaviours should be based on:

- a) Information from the target of the behaviour;
- b) How long the bullying behaviour has been going on;
- c) How often the bullying behaviour is happening; and
- d) Is there an intention to cause harm to the target(s) of the bullying behaviour?

Where a concern about the protection of children arises, it should be reported to the Club Designated Liaison Person or the National Children's Officer.

## **3.3 The No Blame approach**

The preferred method to deal with reports of bullying between young people is the NO BLAME approach. This can help to restore or repair a previously positive relationship and allows the young people involved to consider their feelings, their behaviour and the effects of bullying behaviour on everyone.

The NO BLAME approach seeks a resolution for young people involved in bullying behaviour whilst maintaining their relationship within their peer group. Young people involved often want certain

behaviours to stop, without a need for punishments to be imposed. This approach is often difficult for adults to reconcile, often wanting punishments to be handed out. The guidance should be taken from young people involved.

The NO BLAME approach encourages young people to recognise the impact of their behaviour and to take responsibility for changing it. Using this approach, a previous relationship between individuals or within a team may be re-established and this is often the preferred option for the young people involved.

The ethos behind the NO BLAME approach is to:

1. **EXPLAIN** the problem, i.e. that someone seems to be unhappy, seems to be picked on etc. and explain how that person is feeling; this should not accuse anyone.
2. **ASK** for ideas as to how to help this person.
3. **LEAVE** the individual/group to put their ideas into practice.
4. **MEET** with the individuals involved to check how the behaviour has changed.
5. **SHARE** the responsibility of changing the behaviour and encouraging everyone to speak to a trusted adult if there is bullying behaviour in the club.

The NO BLAME approach does not attempt to get 'confessions', it seeks to get an acknowledgment of behaviour and provides an opportunity for children to change hurtful behaviour. There may be issues that are not resolved through the NO BLAME approach, where behaviour continues. Bullying may have to be dealt with through Squash Ireland's Grievance, Complaints and Disciplinary Policy (Policy 11). However, the outcome for children is far better when issues can be resolved through the NO BLAME approach.

### **3.4 NO BLAME Approach Procedure**

#### **Step 1: Meet with the young person who is the target of the bullying behaviour**

If there has been an incident of bullying behaviour, talk to the young person who is the target of the behaviour. Find out who is involved and what the young person is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- a) What was the behaviour that has caused upset?
- b) Are you physically hurt and/or how are you feeling?
- c) Who was involved in the behaviour, i.e. was it in your own peer group?

- d) When and where did it happen?

Actively listen and advise the young person of the next steps that will be taken.

### **Step 2: Meet with all involved**

Meet with all those involved including those who appear responsible for the bullying behaviour, and some of the others present. This does not necessarily need to be a whole squad/team. Meet the individuals informally or if meeting with the group, it will be necessary to get everyone's points of view and their suggested solutions.

### **Step 3: Explain the problem**

At the meeting explain that it appears there is something going on in general terms without apportioning blame, e.g. you might suggest the target of the bullying behaviour doesn't seem to be happy, and you have heard they have been called names/left out/picked on etc.

Ask questions like:

- a) What do you think they are feeling?
- b) How would you feel if it was you?
- c) What would you do if it happened to you?
- d) What could we do to see it does not happen again?

Do not use specific details of the incident or allocate blame; however, explain how that person might be feeling e.g. loneliness, feeling left out, being rejected, laughed at.

Listen and watch out for reactions and pick up on comments without accusing or isolating anyone.

This is an opportunity to find out how others feel about bullying behaviour.

### **Step 4: Ask the group/individual for their ideas**

The final outcome of the meeting is to seek suggestions that would make a target of the bullying behaviour feel happier. Use phrases like: "if it were you what would help you ....", to encourage a response.

Listen to all suggestions and note them, especially positive responses as these will help create an environment for the young people involved to work together. Agree actions that will create a positive atmosphere and resolve the behaviour.

### **Step 5: Leave it to the group or individual**

Hand the issue to the group to take the suggested actions forward and arrange to meet again a certain time frame. The responsibility is now with the group of individuals to put the suggested actions in place within that time.



### **Step 6: Meet them again**

Meet everyone, including the person who had been responsible for the bullying behaviour and the target of the behaviour; discuss how things are going and check if there have been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and keeps everyone involved in the process. This encourages a team or squad to look after each other and that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated. The parents of the young people involved should be informed of the actions taken.

### **Step 7: Share the responsibility**

Meet with the wider group or team to discuss what should be in place to help prevent further incidents and what impact bullying behaviour may have on everyone, e.g. less free time or social activities, or other actions might need to be imposed as a preventative measure. Any action should be used in the spirit of prevention, not as a punishment.

## **3.5 Use of sanctions**

If bullying behaviour cannot be resolved through the No Blame approach, a formal complaint can be made under Policy 11 Grievance, Complaints and Disciplinary Policy, which is available on the Squash Ireland website.

## **3.6 Child safeguarding**

Where a concern about the protection of children arises, it should be reported to the Club Designated Liaison Person or the National Children's Officer.

## Appendix 1 – Anti-Bullying Record Sheet

Please complete as much information as possible to note an accurate account of the incident.

### General details

Date and time of alleged incident:

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Location:

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Who reported it to you?

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What is the bullying behaviour suspected (e.g. cyber, exclusion, extortion, gesture, physical, verbal):

Description of what happened:

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### Who is involved (record of people alleged to be involved)?

Person responsible for bullying behaviour:

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Target of bullying behaviour:

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Others present:

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**Record the responses from those involved**

Who spoke about it?

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Feelings of individuals involved: (identify how the issue made them feel and any suggestions / fears expressed)

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What action did you take?

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Were the parents informed, and when?

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Was the Child Protection or DLP informed, if so, when?

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What follow up is required (identify who should follow up and when)

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Further action taken (note date and what follow up actions happened)

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Form completed by:

Signature:

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Name:

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Date:

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