

# Wesport Anti-Bullying Policy

## Principles

- Bullying of any kind is not acceptable in any capacity by staff (anyone working for or on behalf of Wesport with children and/ or vulnerable adults in a paid or voluntary capacity.)
- Wesport operates a 'telling' culture whereby anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Wesport Dedicated Child Protection Officer.
- Bullying will be taken seriously, responded to promptly, and procedures followed to deal with the situation.
- It is the responsibility of every staff member working for or on behalf of Wesport whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, to ensure that all children and vulnerable adults can enjoy the sport in a safe enjoyable environment.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

## 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), tormenting (e.g. hiding lacrosse kit or equipment, threatening gestures including sending threatening text messages).
- 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

## Social Media:

Bullying can also occur through social media and this is often harder to detect. It is important to remember that the type of abuse that can occur through social media always includes emotional and psychological abuse and can include sexual and financial abuse. Social media includes (but is not limited to): networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, email, text messages, Skype and instant messaging services.

Some examples of abuse that can occur through social media include:

- Unwanted sexual text messages (sexual abuse)
- Unwanted communication or stalking/harassment (emotional abuse)
- Inappropriate messaging; with kisses attached (emotional and sexual abuse)
- Requests for money (financial abuse)
- Intimidation (emotional abuse)
- Sexual coercion (sexual abuse)
- Cyber-bullying (emotional abuse)

### **Objectives of the policy**

- All staff, coaches, volunteers and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All staff, coaches and volunteers should know what Wesport's policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All participants and parents should know what Wesport's policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Participants and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported

### **Signs and Symptoms**

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

Children and Young People have described bullying as:

- being called names
- being teased
- being hit, pushed, pulled, pinched, or kicked
- having their bag, mobile or other possessions taken
- receiving abusive text messages.
- being forced to hand over money
- being forced to do things they do not want to do.
- being ignored or left out
- being attacked because of religion, gender, sexuality, disability, appearance or ethnic or racial origin

### **Other signs and symptoms**

#### **A child:**

- doesn't want to attend training or club activities
- changes their usual routine
- begins being disruptive during sessions
- becomes withdrawn anxious or lacking in confidence.
- has possessions going missing.
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- starts stammering
- has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- is bullying other children.
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong.

These signs and behaviours may not constitute bullying and be symptoms of other problems. Staff, coaches and volunteers need to be aware of these possible signs and report any concerns to the Wesport Dedicated Child Protection Officer.

### **Procedures and Management of Bullying**

1. Report bullying incidents to the Wesport Dedicated Child Protection Officer, record (using the Wesport Incident Record Form).
2. If the incident involves a child or vulnerable adult bullying a child or vulnerable adult parents may be informed and asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
3. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
4. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue Wesport can initiate disciplinary action under the relevant constitution.

### **Implementing Wesport's Anti-bullying Policy**

Raise awareness with all staff (anyone working for or on behalf of Wesport with children and/ or vulnerable adults in a paid or voluntary capacity):

- Put posters on the notice board
- Ensure all children and vulnerable adults know they can talk to someone if they are worried
- Ensure that parents have a copy of the policy
- Ensure that the Code of Conduct clearly states that behaviour which constitutes bullying will not be accepted
- Ensure all staff, coaches and volunteers have signed up to the code of conduct
- Ensure the policy is given to all staff, coaches and volunteers
- Promote any workshops and opportunities for support (website, email, newsletters, etc)