



Anti-Bullying Policy

Purpose and Aim of This Policy

The aim of Western Lakes Cycling Club (WLCC) Anti-Bullying Policy is to provide detailed guidance to volunteers, as well as to children and young people who may experience bullying, so that they will know what to do if an incident of bullying occurs between children and young people.

The policy also aims to ensure that WLCC responds fairly and consistently to incidents of bullying, recognising that those who bully often have needs too.

This policy applies to all children and young people who attend WLCC who may be bullied, behave in a bullying way towards others or observe someone being bullied.

It also applies to all volunteers who observe bullying between children and young people within WLCC, who may have incidents of bullying reported to them or who may be concerned that a child/young person at WLCC is showing signs of being bullied.

If an adult is bullying a child/young person, this should be reported under the child protection policies.

If a child or young person is bullying another child to the extent that it may cause significant harm, then it will also need to be dealt with under child protection policies.

This policy does not cover incidents of bullying among volunteers. The Discipline Policy should be used for this purpose.

What is Bullying?

Bullying will not be accepted or condoned in WLCC. All forms of bullying will be addressed. Bullying can include:

- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, etc.
- Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation and the continual ignoring of individuals.
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sectarianism.
- Sexual comments and/or suggestions.
- Unwanted physical contact.

Children from ethnic minorities, children with a disability, young people who are gay or lesbian, or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to this form of abuse and may well be targeted.

Everybody has the responsibility to work together to stop bullying – the child, the parent, the coach, the sport's official.

Commitment to the early identification of bullying and prompt, collective action to deal with it.

Children should be encouraged to take a role in stopping bullying in their club and community.

How would you know if a child is being bullied?

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so.

The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied:

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities;
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings);
- Stress-caused illness - headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained;

- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven);
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations;
- Having few friends;
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed);
- Not eating;
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide;
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics).

Who should deal with bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to Tusla or An Garda Síochana, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all Leaders within a club.

How can it be prevented?

- Ensure that all members follow the Codes of Conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member;
- Deal with any incidents as they arise;
- Use a whole group policy or 'no-blame approach', i.e., not 'bullying the bully' but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group, (see below);
- Reinforce that there is 'a permission to tell' culture rather than a 'might is right';
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children;
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation;
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it, it hurts too much;
- Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game;
- Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault.

What to do if you are being bullied

If you are being bullied you should never keep it to yourself. Tell someone you trust. This could be your parent/guardian, teacher, another helper at WLCC or someone else.

You may prefer to tell another young person first and ask that person to help you tell an adult.

If the bullying is happening at WLCC, we will sort it out here. If it's happening somewhere else (at school, for example, or near your home), we will get other people involved to stop it happening there.

What to do if you observe a child or young person being bullied or if someone tells you he/she is being bullied

If you are a child or young person and someone tells you that he or she is being bullied, don't try to deal with it yourself. Talk to the person about getting help from an adult. Try to persuade him or her to go with you to explain the situation to an adult or another helper at WLCC. If he/she won't do this, the best way to help is to explain that you will have to tell an adult yourself -- and then go ahead and tell someone.

If you are an adult and a child tells you that he or she is being bullied, take the child seriously. Do not tell him/her to stop being silly or to keep out of the way of the bullies. This will not help and will make the child feel let down and less inclined to tell anyone else. Listen to the child's full account of what is going on and complete a bullying reporting form with the child as soon as possible.

If you observe the bullying directly, act assertively to put a stop to it. Explain to all concerned that the incident will have to be reported properly to stop it happening again. Report the incident to the Club Safeguarding Officer (CSO).

Unless the incident is minor and can be dealt with informally, the CSO and child's parent or carer should be informed within one working day.

If the bullying is taking place in another environment (e.g. school) the CSO should ask what support the parent and child would like, in order to engage with whoever the responsible agencies might be. The CSO should aim to work in partnership with both parent and child and any other people who may be involved.

If the bullying is taking place within WLCC, the parent and child should be reassured that it will be dealt with as a priority and should be asked for their views on what would be helpful to deal with the situation.

Procedure: The 'No Blame' Approach?

Step 1 - Discuss with the victim

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim
- Was it within his/her own peer group?
- Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation.

Actively listen.

Step 2 - Meet with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Have a maximum of six to eight in the group.
- Keep the number controllable.
- Make a point of calling a 'special' meeting.
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all.
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim.
- Play on the conscience of all - ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?

Step 3 - Explain the problem

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking questions:

- Would they like it if it happened to them?
- "Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what could we do to see it does not happen again?"
- Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone.

Step 4 - Share the responsibility

Explain what steps/controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result.

Step 5 - Ask the group for their ideas

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases "if it were you" to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them.

Step 6 - Leave it to them

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week's time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a timeframe within which something must be done.

Step 7 - Meet them again

Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process. Again enforce the idea of the 'team' looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

Keeping a record of the bullying

Use the bullying reporting form included in this toolbox and take clear notes of any discussions or meetings that take place following the bullying incident. The plan for dealing with the aftermath of the incident should be copied to the child who has been bullied and his/her parent/carers and to the bullies and their parents/carers. CSO will adhere to GDPR Policy.

This procedure should be reviewed every two years

Date of last review: March 2021

Date of next review: March 2023

The person responsible for reviewing it is: Club Safeguarding Officer