



Adapted from Tennis Ireland Child Protection Legislation
<https://www.tennisireland.ie/child-protection/child-protection-legislation/>

Anti-Bullying Policy

What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined by the Department of Education and Skills guidelines as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

All forms of bullying will be addressed.

Everybody in the Club/organisation has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying.

Bullying can include online as well as offline behaviour.

Bullying can include:

- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc...
- Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals.
- Posting of derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social network sites.
- Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, sectarianism, sexual comments, suggestions or behaviour.
- Unwanted physical contact.

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

Sandy Cove Tennis & Squash Club will:

- Recognise its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all participants from harm.
- Promote and implement this anti-bullying policy in addition to our safeguarding policy and procedures.
- Seek to ensure that bullying behaviour is not accepted or condoned.
- Require all members to abide by this policy.
- Take action to investigate and respond to any alleged incidents of bullying.
- Ensure that coaches are given access to information, guidance and/or training on bullying.

Each participant, coach, volunteer or official will:

- Respect every child's need for, and rights to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available.
- Respect the feelings and views of others.
- Recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special and should be valued.
- Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress.
- Be committed to the early identification of bullying, and prompt and collective action to deal with it.
- Ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see.
- Report incidents of bullying they see to the Club children's officer – by doing nothing you are condoning bullying.

Support to the child:

- Children should know who will listen to and support them.
- Systems should be established to open the door to children wishing to talk about bullying or any other issue that affects them.
- Potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child's disability or impairment) need to be identified and addressed at the outset to enable children to approach adults for help.
- Children should have access to Helpline numbers.
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and be supported.
- Any reported incident of bullying will be investigated objectively and will involve listening carefully to all those involved.
- Children being bullied will be supported and assistance given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development.
- Those who bully will be supported and encouraged to stop bullying.
- Sanctions for those bullying others that involves long periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, will be avoided.

Support to the parents/guardians:

- Parents/guardians should be advised on the organisation/ Club's bullying policy and practice.
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent(s)/carers.
- Parents will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and bully) and agreements made as to what action should be taken.
- Information and advice on coping with bullying will be made available.
- Support should be offered to the parent(s) including information on other agencies or support lines.

Useful Contacts:

Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC):

<https://www.ispcc.ie/shield-anti-bullying-programme/>

Anti-Bullying Centre DCU:

<https://antibullyingcentre.ie/>

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Sticks and Stones: 087 9015199 or

<https://www.sticksandstones.ie/>

ChildLine Republic of Ireland: 1800 66 66 66 or Text Talk to 50101,

<https://www.childline.ie/>

Procedures to respond to Bullying Behaviour as an issue happens:

If a Coach / Leader or volunteer becomes aware of a bullying issue while he or she is responsible for a tennis/squash activity, he or she should attempt to deal with the issue immediately, if that is possible. He or she should talk to all the people involved in the bullying behaviour at the same time and try to reach an agreement about what happened. He or she should then highlight the Club's Codes of Conduct and the Anti-Bullying Policy with a reminder about acceptable behaviour in the Club.

If the Coach / Leader decides it is necessary to impose immediate sanctions to deal with the bullying behaviour, he or she should do so. Both the parents of all involved and the Club Children's Officer should be informed of the issue.

The Club expects parents and all adults involved with the Club to be supportive of the immediate resolution process. It is better for all young people involved to sort issues immediately and quickly, where possible.

Procedures to respond to Reports of Bullying after the Event

All allegations of incidents of bullying should be reported in the first instance to either of the Club Children's Officers.

All reports will be listened to carefully and anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be supported. Records will be kept of all reports received. The Club Children's Officer will assess the bullying behaviour based on:

- Information from the target of the behaviour
- How long the bullying behaviour has been going on.
- How often the bullying behaviour is happening.
- Is there an intention to cause harm to the target of the bullying behaviour.

Where appropriate any incident of bullying will be discussed with the parents/guardians of all involved.

A “**No Blame**” approach will be taken in response to the report, where appropriate. The No Blame approach seeks to find a resolution for the young people involved in the bullying behaviour whilst maintaining their relationship within the Club. This is important for any young people who often simply want bullying behaviour to stop, without a need for punishment to be imposed. This approach encourages young people to recognize the impact of their behaviour and then to take responsibility for changing it.

- The problem will be **explained** to those involved, including how any victims may be feeling, without accusing anyone.
- All present will be **asked** for ideas as to how to resolve the situation
- Those present will be **left** to put their ideas into practice
- A **follow up meeting or meetings** will be held to see if behaviour has changed and if the situation is resolved.

Bullying behaviour is a breach of a code of conduct and it may have to be dealt with through a disciplinary process. However, the Club aims to resolve issues through the No Blame approach in the first instance.

All incidents of bullying and details of steps taken to address them will be recorded. Records will be confidential. and will be kept in a locked cabinet in the Club office.

Dealing with bullying behaviour amongst young people in the Club will, in the first instance, be the responsibility of the Club’s Children’s Officers.

If the Children’s Officers are concerned that the form of bullying is such that it could constitute child abuse, it may be necessary to report suspected or known child abuse allegations to Tusla (Child & Family Agency) or An Garda Siochana and the Club’s Reporting procedures will be followed. The Club has in place a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) whose job it is to receive such reports from Club members. They will then decide if a report should be made to Tusla or indeed in certain circumstances to An Garda Siochana.