



OUFC Academy Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Position and values

Our anti-bullying policy sets out how we feel about bullying as a club, what we'll do to tackle it and how we'll support children and young people who experience or display bullying behaviour. This policy aims to contribute to Oxford United's vision of "investing in the lives of young footballers" will seek to promote and provide an environment where every child can feel:

- safe
- valued
- healthy
- able to enjoy and achieve their potential
- able to make a positive contribution

To protect the rights of all children to have a safe and secure environment Oxford United will continuously work towards preventing acts of bullying, harassment, and other forms of aggression and violence as these behaviours are unacceptable. If concerns in relation to bullying arise, the staff and volunteers at Oxford United will follow the anti-bullying guidelines laid out in this policy. All forms of bullying will be acted upon. Everybody in the club has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying and staff will seek to:

- Identify children displaying unacceptable or harmful behaviour
- Identify indicators of concern in relation to children who may be impacted by these behaviours
- Intervene and respond effectively to concerns in line with Club policy and practice guidance in order to support young people who are the subject of concerns to participate in the club effectively and positively
- Promote an environment where participants feel safe, included, happy and confident

2. Clarification of terms

Definition of bullying

A bully is defined as someone who deliberately sets out to hurt another person on more than one occasion. All children have upsets and squabbles; these are not classed as bullying and are dealt with through the Club's Codes of Conduct.

Definition of cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is the use of technology such as mobile phones, email, chat rooms or social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass, threaten, embarrass, intimidate or target a child. Unlike physical bullying, cyber-bullying can often be difficult to identify and evidence as

the cyber- bully (the person responsible for the acts of cyber-bullying) can remain anonymous when threatening or causing distress to others online. This may encourage them to behave more inappropriately or aggressively than they might face-to-face.

Types of bullying

- **Physical:** Deliberately hurting particular children on a regular basis e.g. physically pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching or unwanted physical contact
- **Verbal:** Deliberately hurting feelings through name-calling etc.
- **Ostracising:** Making someone feel left out and different by deliberately setting out to exclude them e.g. spreading rumours; persistent teasing and humiliation; continual ignoring of others; posting of derogatory or abusive comments; videos or images on social media; racial, homophobic, transphobic or sexist comments; taunts or gestures; sexual comments, suggestions or behaviour

Types of cyber-bullying

- **Flaming:** Online fights usually through emails, instant messaging or chat rooms where angry and rude comments are exchanged.
- **Denigration:** Putting hurtful online messages through email, instant messaging, chat rooms, or websites set up to make fun of someone.
- **Exclusion:** Intentionally leaving someone out of a group such as instant messaging, friend sites, or other online group activities.
- **Outing:** Sharing secrets about someone online including private information, pictures, and videos.
- **Trickery:** Tricking someone into revealing personal information then sharing it with others.
- **Impersonation:** Pretending to be someone else when sending or posting mean or false messages online.
- **Harassment:** Repeatedly sending malicious messages to someone online.
- **Cyber-stalking:** Continuously harassing and denigration including threats of physical harm.

Actions NOT considered to be bullying

- Not liking someone
- Being excluded
- Accidentally bumping into someone
- A single act of telling a joke about someone
- Arguments
- Expression of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others
- Isolated acts of harassment, aggressive behavior, intimidation, or meanness

Reasons for bullying

Some reasons why children might bully someone include:

- They think it's fun, or that it makes them popular or cool
- They feel more powerful or important, or they want to get their own way all the time
- They feel insecure or lack confidence or are trying to fit in with a group
- They are fearful of other children's differences
- They are jealous of another child
- They are unhappy

- They are copying what they have seen others do before, or what has been done to them.

The effects of bullying

All forms of bullying cause psychological, emotional and physical stress. Each child's response to being bullied is unique and the impact upon a child should not be minimised or their expressed experienced dismissed. Some signs that may indicate a bullying problem are:

- depression and anxiety
- increased feelings of sadness, helplessness, decreased self-esteem and loneliness
- withdrawal and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy
- unexplained injuries
- lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery
- frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- changes in eating habits / disordered eating e.g. skipping meals or binge eating. Children may come home feeling hungry because they did not eat lunch
- difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to football.
- sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- self-destructive behaviours such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The Club accepts responsibility for preventing and tackling bullying. This means staff must act to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the Club. Additionally, Oxford United have developed this anti-bullying policy which will be promoted to all staff and participants and via the Club website.

Each participant, member of staff, volunteer or official will:

- encourage individuals to speak out about bullying behaviour
- respect every child's need for, and right 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 equal, and that our differences make each of us special and worthy of being valued
- show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress
- ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see
- report incidents of bullying behaviour they see - by doing nothing you are condoning the behaviour

The role of Staff and Volunteers

The Club will support its staff and Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) in all attempts to eliminate bullying from Club activities. The Club will not condone any bullying at all, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Oxford United has adopted a range of strategies to prevent and reduce bullying, to raise awareness of bullying and support victims and those displaying bullying behaviour. Our club will:

- recognise its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all participants and players from harm
- promote and implement this anti-bullying policy in addition to our safeguarding policy and procedures
- ensure that bullying behaviour is not tolerated or condoned
- require all staff and volunteers to implement this policy
- take action to investigate and respond to any reports of bullying from children and young people
- consistently promote the staff and participants' code of conduct of behaviour which requires all staff and players to respect the rights of others
- ensure that staff who work directly with children are given access to information, guidance and training on bullying
- reinforce the clear message that violence has no place at Oxford United
- implement a clear policy of mobile phones not permitted to be in use during Club activities
- raise awareness of cyber bullying
- ensure that all concerns and incidents and the management of these concerns are effectively recorded
- contact, and seek to work in partnership with, the parents of both the child being bullied and the bully
- challenge sexual content within verbal abuse especially challenging the word 'gay' and other homophobic language.

The Club monitors incidents of bullying that do occur and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The Club require the DSO to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the Club on request about the effectiveness of the Club anti-bullying strategies.

A parent/carer who is dissatisfied with the way the Club has dealt with a bullying incident can make a complaint through the Complaints policy which can be accessed from the Club's website.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Officer

It is the responsibility of the DSO to promote and implement the Club's anti-bullying strategy, to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the Club policy, and that they know how to identify and respond to incidents of bullying. The DSO will ensure that Codes of Conduct, appropriate to the age of participants and activities in which they are engaged, are in place, promoted and signed up to by children and young people.

Members of staff will keep a vigilant watch on suspected 'bullies'; any incidents will be handled carefully. It is important that the child responsible for initiating the bullying is dealt with appropriately. The person dealing with the incident will need to collect all the relevant information and then provide the DSO with a copy in order that he/she can decide on an action. All cases are individual and various strategies will be employed by the DSO to address the issue.

The DSO and appropriate staff will do all they can to support a child who is being bullied in partnership with parents, carers and the child's school where appropriate.

Bullying in the workplace

Incidents, where it has been deemed that a member of staff has been bullying a child, will be taken very seriously. The DSO will respond to this in accordance with the Club's safeguarding policy and procedures, with the instigation of disciplinary action where appropriate. Such action will also be taken if it is deemed that a member of staff is bullying other members of staff.

In the event of the DSO being involved in such incidents, reports will be given immediately to the Senior Safeguarding Manager who will take formal action where necessary.

The role of parents/carers

Parents/carers, who are concerned that their child might be being bullied or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact the DSO immediately in a calm manner. If they are not satisfied with the action taken they should contact the Senior Safeguarding Manager. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the safeguarding policy and procedures. Parents/carers have a responsibility to support the clubs anti-bullying policy by actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the Club.

The role of participants

Players and participants in Club activities are encouraged to tell somebody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues they must keep on letting people know.

Supporting children

- We'll let children know who will listen to and support them
- We'll create an "open door" ethos where children feel confident to talk to an adult about bullying behaviour or any other issue that affects them
- Potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child's disability or impairment) will be acknowledged and addressed at the outset to enable children to speak out
- We'll make sure children are aware of helpline numbers including ChildLine (Tel: 0800 1111)
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and reports will be taken seriously
- Any reported experience of bullying behaviour will be investigated and will involve listening carefully to all those involved
- Children experiencing bullying behaviour will be supported and helped to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment
- Those who display bullying behaviour will be supported and encouraged to develop better relationships
- We'll try to make sure that sanctions are proportionate and fair

4. Reporting, sanctions and monitoring How to report bullying Procedures

The following steps must be taken when dealing with incidents of bullying:

1. If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached, or who suspects/observed the bullying.
2. Any member of staff can be approached to report incidents of bullying, and they in turn will report to the DSO.

3. The DSO must be informed immediately
4. A clear account of the incident will be recorded in writing either by the victim or the member of staff recording the victim's verbal statement
5. The DSO will interview all concerned and will record the concerns
6. Parents will be kept informed by the DSO
7. Staff will be kept informed and asked to monitor the situation
8. A range of sanctions will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.

These sanctions could include: verbal or written warnings, restrictions of training and game time and in the event of persistent bullying, permanent exclusion. Where appropriate the DSO may inform the police.

The Club has set procedures to follow in implementing sanctions where a bullying incident has occurred, as described above sanctions are applied in appropriate proportion to the event. In the event of all other avenues being exhausted, or in particularly serious cases that lead to exclusion, the Club will examine the evidence that a wide range of strategies had been tried and failed to affect a positive change in the bullying behaviour.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The DSO and relevant staff will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the club.

5. Designated Safeguarding Staff

The designated safeguarding officer (DSO) for safeguarding is:

Matthew Jarvis 07837842231 mjarvis@oufc.co.uk

The Senior Safeguarding Manager (SSM) is:

Nial McWilliams 07801503330 nmcwilliams@oufc.co.uk

6. Useful websites

www.bullying.co.uk
www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
www.childline.org.uk
www.kidscape.org.uk
www.youngminds.org.uk
www.youngstonewall.org.uk
www.nspcc.org.uk
www.stoptextbully.com
www.beyondbullying.com
www.childnet-int.org
www.cyberbullying.org
www.chatdanger.com
www.thinkuknow.co.uk

In addition to the existing policy, during the period of Return to Play from COVID-19 the Football Club and Academy have made a number of additions to our welfare, operational and safeguarding procedures. These include, but are not limited too:

- **Logistical process for social distancing at the Training Ground.**
- **Small group training in Phase 1 and Phase 2**
- **Weekly welfare and safeguarding meetings with specific COVID-19 allocated staff**
- **Additional risk assessment planning for all Academy operations**
- **Regular contact between Academy COVID-19 Officer (DH) and Club COVID-19 Officer (NMc)**