



Harpenden Colts FC

Anti-bullying Policy

[January 2021]

Harpenden Colts FC is committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all our members so they can participate in football in a fun and safe atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our Club. If bullying does occur, all Club members or parents should feel able to report and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer, currently Liz Attenborough, using the email address: childwelfare@harpendencolts.com, or any other Committee Member.

1 WHAT IS BULLYING?

- 1.1 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:
 - 1.1.1 **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages and tormenting, (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)
 - 1.1.2 **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
 - 1.1.3 **Racist** - targeted at ethnicity, skin colour, and language, religious or cultural practices.
 - 1.1.4 **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
 - 1.1.5 **Homophobic, biphobia and/or transphobic** - targeted at actual or perceived sexuality and/or gender.
 - 1.1.6 **Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
 - 1.1.7 **Disablist** - targeted at an impairment or special educational need.
 - 1.1.8 **Targeting any 'difference'** - bullying behaviour can also be targeted at 'looks', weight and height, colour of hair, wearing glasses or braces, acne, psoriasis and eczema, scars, marks or conditions of the face or body, body odour, poverty, gifts and talents or family situation (e.g., divorce, bereavement, homelessness).
 - 1.2 Bullying can include **Cyberbullying** – where a person uses technology, such as a mobile phone, the internet and/or social networking sites, (including chat rooms, instant messenger, tweets etc.) deliberately to upset someone; the misuse of digital technologies or communications to bully a person or a group, typically through messages or actions that are threatening and/or intended to cause offence, anxiety, or humiliation.
 - 1.3 Examples of cyberbullying include:
 - 1.3.1 Abusive comments, rumours, gossip, and threats made using digital communications and/or technologies - this includes internet/social media
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trolling.

- 1.3.2 Sharing pictures, videos, or personal information without the consent of the owner and with the intent to cause harm or humiliation.
 - 1.3.3 Hacking into someone's email, phone, or online profiles to extract and share personal information, or to send hurtful content while posing as that person.
 - 1.3.4 Creating dedicated websites or social media profiles that intend to harm, make fun of someone, or spread malicious rumours.
 - 1.3.5 Pressurising someone to do something they do not want to such as sending a sexually explicit image.
- 1.4 The Club will ensure that its own websites and any social networking pages are being used appropriately. Any online bullying will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with the procedures set out in this policy.

2 WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RESPOND TO BULLYING?

- 2.1 Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. The Club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

3 SIGNS AND INDICATORS

- 3.1 A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:
- 3.1.1 says he or she is being bullied;
 - 3.1.2 is unwilling to go to club sessions;
 - 3.1.3 becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
 - 3.1.4 feels ill before training sessions;
 - 3.1.5 comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged;
 - 3.1.6 has possessions go “missing”;
 - 3.1.7 asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully);
 - 3.1.8 has unexplained cuts or bruises;
 - 3.1.9 is frightened to say what’s wrong; or
 - 3.1.10 gives improbable excuses for any of the above.
- 3.2 In more extreme cases:
- 3.2.1 starts stammering;
 - 3.2.2 cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
 - 3.2.3 becomes aggressive, disruptive, or unreasonable;
 - 3.2.4 is bullying other children or siblings;
 - 3.2.5 stops eating; or
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3.2.6 attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.

3.3 These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

4 CLUB PROCEDURES

4.1 Report bullying incidents to the HCFC Welfare Officer or a member of other member of the Club's Committee, or contact the County FA Safeguarding Officer (contact details below).

4.2 In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the County FA Safeguarding Officer for advice and possibly to The FA Case Management Team.

4.3 Parents/carers should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.

4.4 If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.

4.5 The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly.

4.6 An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

4.7 If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue, HCFC will initiate disciplinary action under the Club's constitution.

5 RECOMMENDED CLUB ACTION

5.1 If the Club decides it is appropriate for it to deal with the situation at club level, the following procedure will be followed, where appropriate to do so:

5.1.1 Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.

5.1.2 If this fails/is not appropriate, a small panel from the Club Committee including the Club Welfare Officer will meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to obtain details of the allegation. Minutes will be taken for clarity, which will be agreed by all as a true account.

5.1.3 The same panel will meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes will again be taken and agreed.

5.1.4 If bullying has in the panel's view taken place, the individual will be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration will be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.

5.1.5 In some cases, the parent of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The Club Committee will monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.



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5.1.6 All coaches involved with both individuals will be made aware of the concerns, and the steps to be taken following the Club's investigation.

5.2 In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the club who is under 18:

5.2.1 The County FA Safeguarding Officer will always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate.

5.2.2 It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, The FA's Safeguarding Children Education Programme may be recommended.

5.2.3 More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Services.

6 PREVENTION

6.1 The Club will have a written constitution including code of conduct and other behavioural policies, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members, of which the Anti-Bullying Policy is one part.

6.1.1 All Club members and parents/carers will sign to accept the code of conduct upon joining the club.

6.1.2 The Club Welfare Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the Club, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

6.2 The following web links provide for advice and guidance to parents and young people who are faced with dealing with bullying:

6.3 Guidance for parents/carers:

6.3.1 www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

6.3.2 www.stonewall.org.uk

6.3.3 www.bullying.co.uk

6.4 Guidance for young people:

6.4.1 www.youngstonewall.org.uk

6.4.2 www.childline.org.uk

Harpenden Colts FC Club Welfare Officer – Liz Attenborough, can be contacted on childwelfare@harpendencolts.com

Hertfordshire FA Designated Safeguarding Officer:

For concerns of a serious nature or for advice and guidance contact our Designated Safeguarding Officer on 01462 650215 or by emailing safeguarding@hertfordshirefa.com.