Anti-Bullying Policy

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Version Control

Date	Author	Action	Result
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Policy Statement

Triathlon Scotland is fully committed to championing the wellbeing and inclusion of all within our sport. We believe that bullying is never acceptable and that everyone within our sport has the right to participate and perform in a safe and inclusive environment.

Triathlon Scotland recognises our responsibility in our [wellbeing and protection policies](#) to promote safe practice and to protect all members, from harm, poor practice, exploitation and abuse; this includes bullying. Our Anti-Bullying policy takes into account Respect for All: The national approach to anti-bullying in Scotland and our commitment to the principals of "Getting it Right for Every Child" (GIRFEC).

Triathlon Scotland is fully committed to an inclusive environment and rights-based approach within our sport. To that end we recognise and implement the general principals of both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the Equality Act. Staff and volunteers will work together to embrace difference and diversity, and respect the rights of all.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable, Triathlon Scotland understand that a child's (or adults) wellbeing can be seriously impacted by bullying behaviour and therefore recognises the information provided by respect *me,* Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service: 'Bullying is never acceptable; it doesn't make a person better or stronger to get through it and it should never be seen as a normal part of growing up/life".

Triathlon Scotland believes that the best approach to tackling bullying is to create a positive culture, ethos of inclusion and take a preventative approach.

Preventative Actions

- Know about the anti-bullying plan/policy.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour – even small incidents should not go unchallenged.
- Patrol/manage know hot-spot locations.
- Think about how to stop bullying before it happens.
- Ensure everyone is included, engaged and involved and have the opportunity to participate.
- Re-enforce the positive use of Codes of Conduct.

This policy applies to all regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion, socio-economic status or family circumstance.

Bullying a Definition

Bullying is a behaviour that can make a person feel frightened, threatened, left out and hurt. Something only has to happen once to make a person feel worried or scared to go to their club training or other places they enjoy going.

Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of him or herself. This is what we term as their sense of 'agency'. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened and left out. This behaviour happens both face-to-face and online. (*Respect for All*)

Bullying is hurtful behaviour, in situations where it's difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves; often carried out where people in a position of power and authority can't see it. It can take many forms, including:

- Physical – tripping, hitting, kicking, punching, shoving, any use of violence as well as theft or damage to someone's belongings.

- Verbal - threats, name-calling, spreading rumours, teasing name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening, spreading rumours.

- Emotional - ignoring, leaving out an individual from the activities and social acceptance of the peer group, being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding belongings, threatening gestures).

- Harassment - making people feel like they are being bullied or fearful of being bullied e.g. using abusive or insulting behaviour in a manner intended to cause alarm or distress.

- Cyber - sending abusive text, email or instant messages, vindictive posts on all areas of the internet such as social media sites e.g. Facebook or Instagram, nasty messages, emails, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of connected technology, i.e. camera and videos.

- Prejudiced based - targeting someone because of who they are or are perceived to be e.g. age, asylum seekers/refugees, body image/physical appearance, disability, gender identify/transphobia, gypsy/travellers, sexual orientation/homophobic, looked after young people, marriage/civil partnership, race/racism, religion or belief, sexism/gender or sectarian using abusive or insulting behaviour in a manner intended to cause alarm or distress.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber Bullying should not be treated any differently from face to face bullying. Online or cyber bullying refers to bullying and harassment through the use of electronic devices such as personal computers and mobile phones - using email, texting and social networking websites.

Cyber Bullying is wilful and involves recurring or repeated harm inflicted through the medium of electronic devices and is meant to cause emotional distress.

Cyber Bullying might include:

- A peer who intimidates through the use of a social networking website
- A coach who sends negative feedback about a participant via personal text message
- A club member who posts negative comments about a fellow member on a club forum

Cyber Bullying may also include threats, sexual remarks and hate speech. E-Bullies may publish personal contact information of their victims at websites. They may attempt to act as the victim for the purpose of publishing material in their name that would defame or ridicule them.

Cyber Bullying is particularly serious due to the nature in which the abuse occurs. It can be very personal and take place in a closed private format where the victim may feel isolated and the content will not be viewed by parents, friends or siblings. Alternatively it could take place in a public format. It may lead to the victim rereading any material in private perhaps leading to feelings of paranoia, depression or loneliness.

Bullying takes many forms but ultimately it is the perception of the victim that determines whether or not they are being bullied rather than the intention of the bully.

When is it not bullying?

Adult to Child Behaviours

Bullying is between peers e.g. child to child, there are times when adults behaviour towards children can be described as "bullying" such as a parent who pushes too hard, a coach or manager with a 'win at all costs' mentality. Triathlon Scotland believes that adults who behave in a manner that causes distress, hurt or upset to a child are behaving on a spectrum that runs from poor practice to abuse and that behaviour is more appropriately dealt with via the Triathlon Scotland Wellbeing & Child Protection policy.

Attempted Bullying

Sometimes, attempts to bully can have no obvious or immediate effect. A person can attempt to bully someone using a range of behaviours but it may have no impact – in this case the person has not been bullied **but** the behaviour needs challenged and recorded appropriately and should not be ignored. For example, the use of homophobic or other derogatory language, which may have no impact on the person it is aimed at, must still be challenged, as the language itself is unacceptable, would be a breach of the Code of Conduct and could impact on other people. Some behaviour can be perceived as or assumed to be bullying.

Criminal Behaviour

Certain incidents can often be more serious and be criminal in nature and bullying and this more serious set of criminal behaviours can often overlap. It is important for Staff and volunteers to know the difference between bullying and criminal offences such as hate crime, child sexual exploitation and gender-based violence such as domestic abuse and sexual assault. For instance, when someone is coerced or pressurised to do something sexual or is touched inappropriately, this is not bullying, this is sexual assault or abuse and a form of gender-based violence. There are laws to protect people from this very serious type of behaviour.

Identifying & Managing Bullying

Potential Signs Of Bullying

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children/adults. A child/adult may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Staff and volunteers should be aware of these possible signs and investigate if someone says they are being bullied.

The person may:

- Become withdrawn, anxious or appears to lack confidence.

- Hesitation or reluctance to attend training or other club activities.

- Regularly feel ill before training sessions.

- Be reluctance to work with a certain individual.

- Often be the last one picked for a team or group activity for no apparent reason, or be picked on when they think your back is turned.

- Clothing or personal possessions go missing or get damaged.

- Becomes aggressive towards others, disruptive or unreasonable.

- Believe that there is something wrong with them.

- Is frightened to say what is wrong

- Suffer from depression/develop feelings of worthlessness.

- Starts to stammer.

- Stop eating.

- Exhibit self-harm behaviours such as cutting, an eating disorder, taking of drugs/alcohol.

- In extreme cases, commit suicide.

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

Bullying will not just stop or go away. Bullies can be very cunning and develop strategies to avoid it being seen by anyone but the victim.

Responding to Bullying

Bullying results in pain and distress, no one deserves to be bullied. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Everyone involved in Triathlon has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Bullying takes place in the context of relationships. Promoting respectful relationships, repairing relationships where appropriate and ensuring we respond to all forms of prejudice will help create an environment where bullying cannot thrive.

When someone discloses they are experiencing bullying:

- Listen.

- Take people seriously when they talk about experiencing bullying.

- Record what has been said (on an incident report form).

- Report the issue to the Wellbeing & Protection Officer.

- Do not promise to keep the issue a secret, or take sole responsibility.

Labelling

Labelling people as 'bullies' or 'victims' can be disempowering and unhelpful in changing their behaviour or supporting their recovery from being bullied. Labelling an action as bullying is a more effective way of motivating a person to change their bullying behaviour.

Staff & volunteers dealing with bullying behaviours are expected to be able to distinguish between a person and their behaviour. Any bullying behaviour must be challenged, however, all people (including those causing bullying) should always be treated with respect. This does not diminish the seriousness nor impact of bullying behaviour; rather, it is an essential way of maintaining the staff/volunteer's focus and response on the behaviour that is problematic. This is a solution-oriented approach that is designed to help people change the way they behave without being stigmatised. Staff and volunteers, rather than labelling them, can help people change by telling them that the behaviour is bullying and that what they did is not acceptable.

Triathlon Scotland sets high standards of conduct for all its members, these standards are set out in our Codes of Conduct, a breach of these expectations should be handled through the clubs Disciplinary Procedures.

Management of bullying

A person who has been bullied does not feel in control of the situation and may not feel free to exercise choice. By supporting them to make choices, this helps restore their sense of agency; develop their resilience; and establish positive relationship approaches that they will need to move forward. People need to have choices on how they share and report bullying and bullying concerns.

A range of strategies can be used to address bullying:

- Use of Code of Conduct and a disciplinary approach.
- Restorative Approach.
- Solution Oriented Approach.
- Nurturing Approach.
- Mentoring, peer support or buddy systems.

The strategy to be used should be discussed with the individual and their views and thoughts taken into account, every person is different and it is important that while inappropriate behaviour is challenged and dealt with that the person experiencing that via this process has a voice and starts to re-gain the sense of control over their situation that was lost as part of the bullying cycle.

To help create an action plan to deal with bullying, consider the following questions:

1. What was the behaviour?
2. What impact did it have?
3. What does the child or young person want to happen?
4. What do I need to do about it?
5. What attitudes, prejudices or other factors have influenced the behaviour?

People who are exhibiting bullying behaviour will need help and support to:

- Identify the feelings that cause them to act this way.
- Develop alternative ways of responding to these feelings.
- Understand the impact of their behaviour on other people.
- Repair relationships.

We need to help people who demonstrate bullying behaviour by:

- Providing clear expectations about behaviour – clear reference to Codes of Conduct
- Providing a range of ways to respond e.g. taking steps to repair a relationship, and where appropriate, supporting them to make amends.
- Challenge prejudice and offer the opportunity to learn and change behaviour.
- Consideration should be given to any factors that may impact upon a person's wellbeing, including whether any additional support for learning is required.

Recording and monitoring bullying incidents

Accurate recording of bullying incidents ensures that an appropriate response has taken place. It is crucial to enable monitoring of the effectiveness of policy and practice, and use that information to review and update this policy on a regular basis.

Monitoring bullying incidents is essential and helps identify recurring patterns, enabling early intervention. When recording incidents record on the Incident Report Form:

- Who was involved in the incident (include staff or volunteers)?

- Where and when bullying has taken place?

- The type of bullying experienced, e.g. name-calling, rumours, threats etc.

- Any underlying prejudice including details of any protected characteristic(s)?

- Consideration of personal or additional support needs and wellbeing concerns.

- Actions taken including resolution at an individual or organisational level.

Review

This Policy will be regularly reviewed:

- In accordance with changes in guidance on anti-bullying or following any changes within Triathlon Scotland.

- Following any issue or concern raised about bullying within Triathlon Scotland.

- In all other circumstances, at least every three years.

Any review will take into account members, including children and their parents/carers, feedback on the content and actual experience of implementation as part of the review

Appendix 1 – Actions for Member Clubs

Actions for Member Clubs

In order to prevent, reduce and respond effectively to bullying behaviour Triathlon Scotland recommends all clubs should implement this policy through:

- Respecting the rights of children as paramount.

- Working together to develop positive relationships amongst children and adults that are mutually respectful, responsible and trusting; and promote their emotional health and wellbeing.

- Training, supporting and supervising parents, coaches and volunteers to adopt best practice to prevent, reduce and respond to bullying.

- Addressing the needs of children who are bullied as well as those who bully within a framework of respect, responsibility, resolution and support.

- Responding to any concerns raised either in the experiences of children of poor practice/misconduct or abuse caused by an adult's bullying behaviour.

- Highlighting bullying based on prejudice and perceived differences, to ensure our practices are effective in dealing with these issues.

- Regularly monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this policy and guidelines and include children's views in this process.

- It is essential that all committee members, coaches, volunteer, parents and children are aware of this policy