

## **COMMUNITY GAMES ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**All policies are to be read in conjunction with the Community Games Code of Conduct.**

**All policies belong to the members of Community Games. Every member must agree to abide by the rules and policies set out by Community Games.**

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

**'It is ok to tell'**

The Community Games aims to create a supportive environment where any form of bullying is unacceptable. Incidents of bullying are considered as serious breaches of the Community Games Code of Conduct. We are committed to achieving an ethos of respect so as to maximise the potential of all our members when participating in Community Games events. All children and adults have a right to be treated with respect regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, family status, disability or membership of the Traveller community.

### **AIM OF POLICY**

The aim of this policy is to afford protection for all Community Games members and to ensure the welfare of each child participating in Community Games activities.

Objectives:

- To ensure that incidents of bullying are addressed appropriately
- To ensure that all members are aware that bullying will not be tolerated
- To give clear guidance on how to address suspected or actual cases of bullying

### **DEFINITIONS**

- Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it be verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others (Children First 2011)
- Bully- refers to the person who uses bullying behaviour
- Cyberbullying refers to bullying which is carried out using the internet, mobile phone or other technological devices (Get With It – Guide to Cyberbullying). See Appendix 3 for more information on dealing with cyberbullying

### **IMPACT OF BULLYING**

Impact of bullying on 'Target':

- Physiological symptoms: headaches, stomach problems, disturbed sleep, possible visual marks on the body, bruising, etc.
- Psychological symptoms: anger, worry, fear. Depression, loss of confidence, thoughts of suicide.

Impact of bullying on 'Bully':

- Socially isolated, lack of empathy, low self esteem, getting into trouble.

## **TYPES OF BULLYING**

Bullying can take many different forms:

- Verbal which includes but is not exclusive to:

Threatening behaviour, spreading rumours, name calling, teasing, making sexual/racist/sectarian remarks, highlighting physical appearances or sporting ability.

- Physical which includes but is not exclusive to:

Kicking, punching, hitting, spitting, biting, tripping, theft or destruction of property and kit.

- Emotional which includes but is not exclusive to:

Ignoring, excluding, getting people into trouble, leaving them out of games, talking behind their backs, writing unpleasant notes/letters/graffiti, writing letters/text messages/emails or comments on social network sites.

Anyone maybe involved in bullying incidents including, participants, coaches, mentors, leaders, parents, spectators, bystanders, judges, umpires or referees.

Bullying can happen from:

- Child to child
- Child to adult
- Adult to child and
- Adult to adult

Look at who is involved:

- The 'Bully'
- The Target/s
- The Bystander/s
- The 'Don't Care Team'

## **PREVENTING BULLYING**

It is the responsibility of everybody involved in Community Games to prevent or if need be to deal with incidents of bullying. We to create a supportive environment where it is not acceptable to bully and where the ethos of the Community Games is that it is 'ok to tell' if you know about an incident of bullying.

All members, including adults and children must:

- Respect every person's right to play and participate in an environment which is safe and secure and also offers praise and recognition
- Ensure that every person is treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity
- Recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special
- Challenge all forms of prejudice and promote equality
- Model fair play, respectful behaviour and leadership
- Discourage people from colluding with bullying

The Children's Officer in each Area and County has a responsibility to promote an 'anti bullying ethos' and ensure that the Area adheres to the Community Games Code of Conduct.

The Children's Officer should talk to children, their parents and volunteers to inform them of the above points and reassure those who maybe involved in a bullying incident that 'it is ok to tell'.

#### Seven Key Features of Bullying

1. An intention to be hurtful
2. This intention is carried out
3. The behaviour harms the target
4. The bully overwhelms the target with his/her power
5. There is no justification for the action
6. The behaviour repeats itself again and again
7. The bully derives a sense of satisfaction from hurting the target.

### **DEALING WITH AN INCIDENT OF BULLYING**

#### **Immediate intervention**

Attempt to resolve the matter in an informal manner:

- Speak to those involved without labelling
- Seek to immediately rectify the matters if possible
- Informally consult with the Children's Officer
- Take a 'common sense' approach

#### **Formal Response**

When an immediate intervention fails to resolve the situation it should then be dealt with by the Children's Officer as a breach of the Code of Conduct:

- Confidentiality must be maintained
- Children's Officer to assess the situation, using a common sense approach
- Identify the Bullying behaviour by asking the following questions:
  - Target: Is the behaviour targeted at a group or an individual?
  - Duration: Has the behaviour been happening over a period of time?
  - Frequency: How frequent is the behaviour and is there a pattern occurring?
  - Intention: Is the intention of the behaviour to cause pain/harm/distress to an individual or group?

Once an initial assessment of the situation has been made, the Children's Officer should follow these steps to try to resolve the situation:

- Speak to the bullying Target/s
- Speak to the 'Bully'
- Seek an informal resolution

The parents/guardians must be involved in each of these steps

If there is no resolution, the Children's Officer should follow these steps:

- Speak to relevant bystanders and to alleged 'Bully' and Target/s
- Gather facts and make a recommendation to the Area/County Disciplinary Committee
- Outcome agreed
- Inform all relevant parties including parents if applicable
- Implement actions
- Record and monitor as appropriate

Possible Strategies or Actions

- Mediation
- Time out (sub on and off)
- Suspension
- Expulsion- use only as a last resort

## **COMMUNICATION OF THIS POLICY**

All children, adults, parents and volunteers must be informed of the Community Games Anti - Bullying policy.

It is the responsibility of the Area and/or County Children's Officer to ensure that children and their parents know about the Community Games Code of Conduct and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Copies of this policy will be distributed, as directed by the Board of Directors, to each County Secretary and will also be available for download at [www.communitygames.ie](http://www.communitygames.ie).

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Chief Executive Officer by the 1<sup>st</sup> February of each year.  
Next Review Date: 01-02-2015

## **Appendix 1**

### **Guidelines for Children to deal with bullying- Use this information when talking to children and teenagers about bullying or when developing your own Anti Bullying policy or poster**

Everyone had a right to be respected, to enjoy playing sports and taking part in cultural activities without the fear of being bullied, harassed, discriminated or hurt.

**Remember it is not your fault! Bullying is wrong and you have a right to look for help. If you don't look for help, the bullying will continue to happen. It will be much easier to stop the bullying if you have an adult to help you and someone to talk about the problem**

#### **If you are being bullied:**

- Write down or draw a picture of what is happening. Talking or drawing about your feelings will help you to feel better.
- Always try to stay in a group where you feel safe.
- You could try to join a new club or a new activity where you can make new friends.
- Talk to someone and ask for advice.
- You can talk to your Children's Officer or any other adult that you trust for advice.
- Remember its ok to tell.
- If you're worried or scared, ask a friend to come with you.
- If you don't feel as if you're being taken seriously, or if no action is taken, it doesn't mean what's happening is ok. You were right to bring it up. Tell someone else and keep at it until something changes.

#### **If your friend is being bullied:**

- Talk to them and tell them that it's ok to tell.
- Seek advice from your Children's Officer or another adult that you trust.
- Encourage your friend to talk to the Children's Officer or another adult that they trust.
- Most important be a friend.

#### **If you witness someone else being bullied:**

- Do not stand by and look on or chose to ignore it- remember this could be you or one your friends.
- Invite the person to join your group.
- If the person who has been bullying wants to play in your group, explain that you only play fair.
- Tell the Children's Officer or another adult that you trust.
- Encourage the person being bullied to speak to the Children's Officer or another adult that they trust.

#### **If you are person doing the Bullying Behaviour**

- You might lose friends.
- Some people might be scared of you. Even your friends might be scared but won't say.

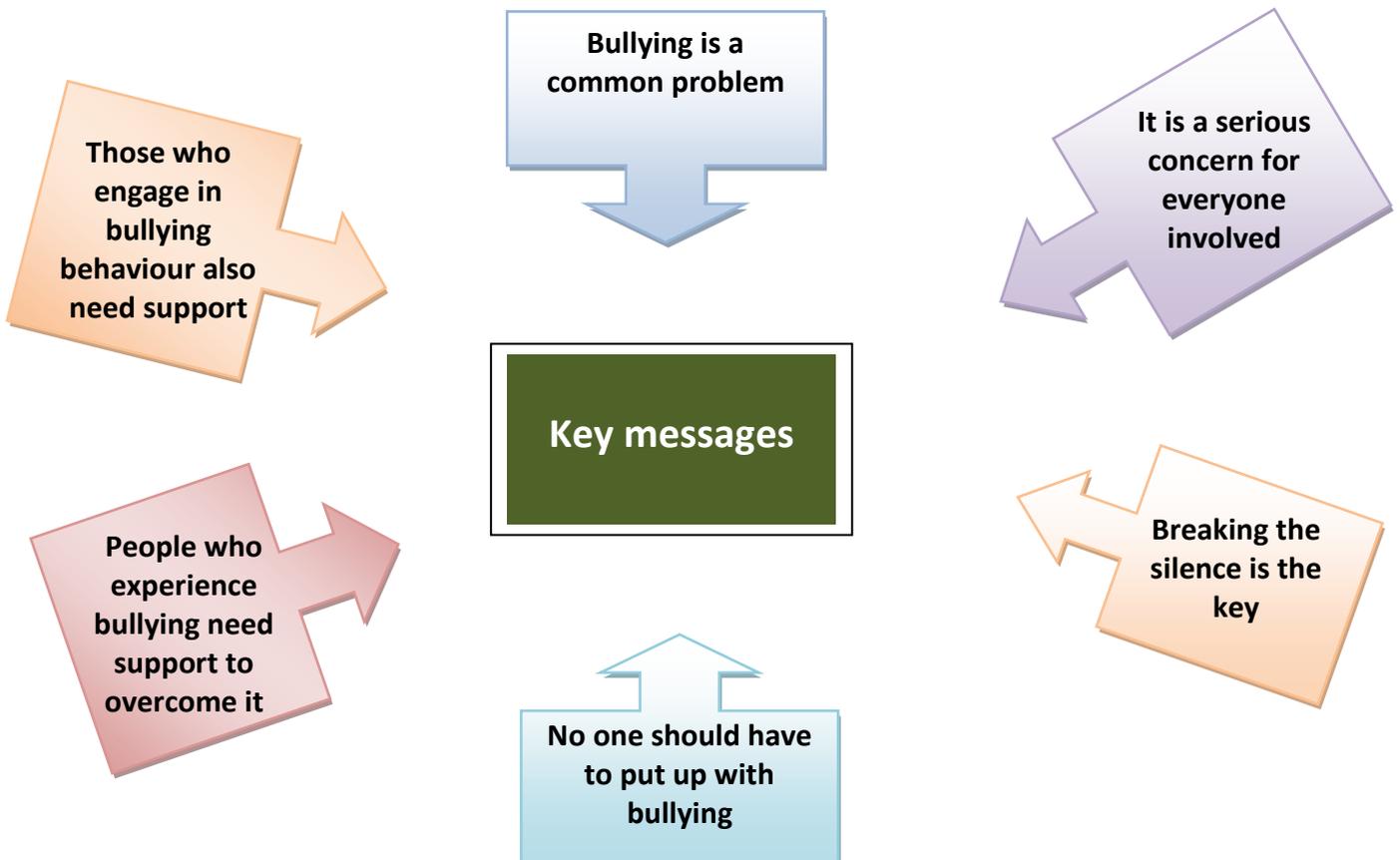
- There are lots of nice things about you but sometimes people don't get to see these things, instead they see you hurting other people.
- People might start to call you names like 'the bully' - this will hurt your feeling.
- Talk to someone you trust.
- Think about others feel and how you would feel in their situation.
- Set a goal each day for example 'Today I won't call anyone name' - be proud when you do this.
- Apologise to whomever you have upset.

### Friendships are Important

- Be kind and have respect for others.
- If you have a fight, say sorry. If your friend says sorry and they mean it, let them know its ok.
- Treat people the way you would like to be treated.
- Help your friends when they need help. Listen if they have a problem.

**The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (which Ireland signed up to in 1992) provides many rights to all children and young people. It says that you have the right:**

- To be protected and live free of violence, abuse or harm.
- To be treated with dignity and respect.
- To be free from discrimination.



## Appendix 2

### Useful Contacts

Community Games National Children's Officer

Caitríona Reynolds, HSE Community Games, 20 Inish Carraig House, Golden Island, Athlone, Co. Westmeath

+353 87 9242125

[caitrona@communitygames.ie](mailto:caitrona@communitygames.ie)

Barnardo's,

National Office, Christchurch Square, Dublin 8

+353 (0) 1 453 0355

Callsave: 1850 222 300

[info@barnardos.ie](mailto:info@barnardos.ie)

[www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)

Childline

[www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)

text 'talk' to **50101** or free phone 24 hours a day **1800 66 66 66**

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

free phone 24 hours a day **0800 1111** or log onto the website to email a counsellor

[www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie) – 'Get with it! - A Guide to Cyberbullying'

[www.spunout.it](http://www.spunout.it)

[www.childprotection.ie](http://www.childprotection.ie)

or

[www.youthhealth.ie](http://www.youthhealth.ie)

'Let's Beat Bullying'

## **Appendix 3**

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying refers to bullying which is carried out using the internet, mobile phone or other technological devices.

Cyberbullying generally takes a psychological rather than a physical form but is often part of a wider form of traditional bullying.

It can involve sending nasty text messages or emails, posting nasty messages or images on a social networking site, silent phone calls, saying hurtful things in chat rooms, or accessing someone's account to make fun of them.

Once off posting of nasty comments or uploading photographs intended to embarrass someone is not necessarily bullying. It is important not to rush in and see bullying where it does not exist.

It is important to be aware of Cyberbullying because:

- Young people are growing up on-line. Technology plays a very significant role in their lives
- Technologies are constantly changing. Move from passive users to active creators of content
- Young people tend to believe what they see and read on a screen
- Behaviour can take place away from the sight of parents/adults
- Young people can be naïve thinking they won't get punished as it is not in the 'real world'
- Access to a large audience increases power and impact

Top Tips for dealing with Cyberbullying

- Don't reply to the message
- Keep the message/image
- Tell someone you trust
- Block the sender
- Report problems to:  
the website or mobile phone operator  
[www.hotline.ie](http://www.hotline.ie)  
[www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)  
or An Garda Síochána or the PSNI