



Anti-Bullying Policy

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Policy Statement

Play Inclusion Project is committed to providing a caring, supportive, and friendly environment where children and young people learn to value and respect each other while being challenged to reach their full potential. All staff and volunteers share responsibility for promoting and protecting such an environment.

Play Inclusion Project also:

- Respects every child and young person's need for, and rights to, an environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available
- Respects every individual's feelings and views
- Recognises that everyone is important and that our differences make us special
- Shows appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress

Definition

Bullying is the intentional use of aggression to hurt, intimidate, or control another person. It is an abuse of power that results in pain and distress to the victim.

Types of Bullying

- **Emotional:** Exclusion, intimidation, tormenting, sending hurtful messages.
- **Physical:** Pushing, hitting, kicking, or other violent acts.
- **Sexual:** Unwanted sexual comments or contact.
- **Discrimination:** Racist, homophobic, sexist, disablist, or religiously motivated abuse.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, teasing, sarcasm, spreading rumours.
- **Cyberbullying:** Online abuse via social media, messaging, video, or gaming platforms.

Signs and Indicators

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of potential signs that a child is being bullied, such as:

Reluctance to attend sessions or school.

- Withdrawal, anxiety, or lack of confidence.
- Complaints of illness before sessions.
- Damaged or missing belongings.
- Requests for or stealing money.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns, nightmares, or bedwetting.
- Aggressive or disruptive behaviour.
- Bullying others.
- Threats or attempts to self-harm or run away.

Signs may indicate other issues, but bullying should always be considered and investigated.

Bullying as a Result of any Form of Discrimination

Discrimination-based bullying targets individuals based on gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, or ability.

Forms include:

- Verbal abuse: Derogatory remarks, spreading rumours, ridicule based on identity.
- Physical abuse: Hitting, kicking, sexual assault, threatening behaviour.

Forms of Discrimination-Based Bullying

- **Racist & Religious Bullying:** Behaviour making a person feel unwelcome or excluded due to ethnicity, culture, religion, or nationality.

Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, all public bodies have a duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and promote good race relations. Tackling racist bullying is a key part of fulfilling this duty.

- **Sexual, Sexist, and Transphobic Bullying:** Bullying based on gender, sexual identity, or transgender status, including inappropriate touching or sexual jokes.
- **Homophobic Bullying:** Targeting someone because of real or perceived sexual orientation.
- **Bullying of Children with Disabilities:** Includes standard bullying and exploiting disabilities, e.g., sensory sensitivities.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying involves online harassment and abuse through social media, messaging apps, online games, or other digital platforms. Examples include:

- Threatening or abusive messages.
- Spreading rumours or embarrassing content/images
- 'trolling' - sending menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- Exclusion from online groups, games, chat rooms
- Fake accounts or hijacked identities.
- Setting up hate sites
- Encouraging self-harm.
- Voting or polling abuse online.

All forms of cyberbullying will be treated with the same seriousness as offline bullying. When bullying happens online it can involve social networks, games and mobile devices.

Procedures

Any reported incidents or suspicions of bullying should be reported to the relevant Area Manager

- Staff feeling bullied should report incidents to their Area Manager or the Recruitment Officer if the bullying is by the Area Manager.
- The Area Manager or Recruitment Officer will investigate objectively, listens to all parties, explain inappropriateness, and seek a resolution (including genuine apologies).
- If unresolved, the incident will be escalated to the CEO who investigates further and may involve parents or other staff members.
- If still unresolved, a small panel (Board member, CEO, Area Manager) will meet the parties together and separately.
- If necessary, the panel decides on further action.
- Police may be consulted if appropriate.
- All cases are recorded and filed appropriately.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the club under 18

- The CEO should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken, where appropriate, this may include action following the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

- It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a member of staff or volunteer, safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Social Care