MATLOCK TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

Anti-Bullying Policy

Implementation Date:	**1st August 2024**
Owner:	**Neil Holmes (CWO)**
Next Review Date:	**1st August 2025**

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Matlock Town Football Club are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members, so they can participate in football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our Club. If bullying does occur, all club members and parents/carers should be able to tell their club about this and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively by the club.

We are a TELLING club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer or any committee member. The Club is committed to playing its part to teach players to treat each other with respect.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace and comes in many different forms:

Verbal: Name calling, persistent teasing, mocking, taunting and threats.

Physical: Any form of physical violence, intimidating behaviour, theft or the intentional damage of possessions. This includes hitting, kicking and pushing.

Emotional: Excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation, setting people up and spreading rumours.

Cyberbullying: 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. Examples of cyberbullying include:

- Abusive comments, rumours, gossip and threats made using digital communications and/ or technologies - this includes internet trolling.
- Sharing pictures, videos or personal information without the consent of the owner and with the intent to cause harm or humiliation.
- 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.
- Creating dedicated websites that intend to harm, make fun of someone or spread malicious rumours.
- Pressurising someone to do something they do not want to such as sending a sexually explicit image.

Whilst the above constitute forms of cyber bullying, it is also important to understand that some of what is described are also criminal offences.

Matlock Town Football Club commits to ensure our website, social networking pages & digital systems are being used appropriately and any online bullying will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with procedures detailed in this policy.

WHY DOES BULLYING TAKE PLACE?

People can be targeted for any reason, but people who bully others often target 'difference' and bullying can be a form of wider discrimination. For example, bullying behaviour may be:

- Racist: Targeted at ethnicity, skin colour, and language, religious or cultural practices.
- Homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic: Targeted at actual or perceived sexuality and/or gender.
- Sexual and/or sexist: Sexual and/or sexist behaviour that is intended to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation.
- Disablist: Targeted at an impairment or special educational need.
- 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).
- Discrimination: Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, or ability.

Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and no one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Matlock Town Football Club recognises its responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

PROCEDURES

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer or a member of the club's committee.
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer for advice and possibly to The FA Case Management Team.
3. Parents/carers should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

RECOMMENDED CLUB ACTION

If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow the procedure outlined below:

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

2. If this fails/is not appropriate, a small panel (composed from the Chairperson, Club Welfare Officer, Secretary, committee members) should meet with the parent/carer and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.

3. The same three persons should meet with the alleged bully and parent/carer and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.

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

5. In some cases the parent/carer 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 should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.

6. All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

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

1. The County Designated Safeguarding Officer must be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate. This may include action by The FA Safeguarding Team.

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.

3. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Social Care.

PREVENTION

- Matlock Town has written Codes of Conduct which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members, of which the Anti-Bullying Policy is one part.
- All club members and parents/carers will sign the codes of conduct upon joining the club.
- 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.

This policy template is based on guidance provided by KIDSCAPE, a voluntary organisation committed to help prevent child bullying.

The Kidscape team can be contacted by email at info@kidscape.org.uk Monday – Friday, or you can access their website via www.kidscape.org.uk.

If you are a parent/carer in need of advice or support, please contact the Kidscape Parent Advice Line in the first instance.

You may wish to access any of the following websites designed to give advice and guidance to parents and children who are faced with dealing with bullying:

Guidance for parents/carers

https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/

https://www.stonewall.org.uk

https://www.familylives.org.uk

https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk

Guidance for young people

https://www.childline.org.uk

https://www.youngstonewall.org.uk