



## Ball Hockey UK

# Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

## Statement Of Intent

Ball hockey is a sport that is designed for everyone regardless of their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs, social background or sexual identity. It is fun, promotes camaraderie and allows friendships to be cultivated. As with any sport rivalries will be established and banter can help a team to bond and allow team members to get to know each other. However, if this is persistently aimed at one individual this can easily become bullying and if upset is caused to an individual it could lessen their enthusiasm for the sport and damage their self-confidence. Encouraging everyone and offering support when required will ensure that each person can participate to the best of their ability.

Ball Hockey UK (BHUK), and all of our member clubs are committed to providing a safe and friendly environment for everyone to play the game and to allow them to maximise their potential. Bullying and harassment of any kind are unacceptable within the sport, therefore, we expect everyone to act safely, be safe and feel confident to seek support should they believe that they or others are unsafe.

With regard to the junior clubs, we want parents to feel confident that their children are safe and cared for in the sport and that incidents, if they should arise, are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Thankfully, instances of this nature are very rare but complacency must be avoided. BHUK acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse.

In an ideal world each club should appoint a Welfare Officer, whose responsibility it is to oversee all allegations of bullying. Admittedly, in a volunteer dependant sport such as ours this isn't always possible but even if this role is left to the club president to fill these shoes it is essential that the role is treated with the utmost importance.

## What Is Bullying?

It is as important to know what bullying is not as it is to know what it is. Bullying is not an occasional disagreement or a sporadic unkind comment made during the course of a game. Bullying is deliberate, hurtful behaviour, either physical or psychological, which is unprovoked and is repeated over a period of time.

Some types of bullying are:

- Physical e.g. hitting, kicking, taking belongings.
- Emotional e.g. derogatory name calling of an insulting and/or personal nature.
- Demanding money, goods or favours by means of threat or force.

- Verbal e.g. name calling, insulting remarks.
- Written e.g. threatening or embarrassing notes or graffiti.
- Social e.g. spreading rumours, excluding from groups.
- Sexual e.g. unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Sexuality or gender identity.
- Racist e.g. racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Cyber e.g. the use of mobile phones or the internet.

It is quite possible that the actions listed above could be symptoms of issues not linked to bullying. However, they should be considered and investigated as signs of bullying just in case.

## **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and nobody deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying hurts all those involved, it hurts the victim and it hurts the bully who needs to learn different ways of behaving.

The policy of BHUK and its member clubs is to ensure that everyone has an understanding of bullying and its different types. Furthermore, we will not tolerate any form of bullying and any reported instances will be investigated and support provided to anyone making a report.

## **Objectives of this Policy**

- BHUK requires that everyone involved with the sport has an understanding of what bullying is.
- BHUK requires that everyone involved with the sport is aware of the policy on bullying and to follow it when bullying is reported.
- BHUK requires that everyone involved with the sport takes bullying seriously. Players and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- BHUK requires that everyone involved with the sport knows that bullying will not be tolerated.

## **Reporting Bullying**

All reported incidents will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. If anyone suspects, or has any evidence to suggest, that anyone may be being bullied, they should refer the matter directly to their club president and/or the BHUK president as a matter of urgency.

Coaches should be aware of the possible signs and should investigate or seek further advice if they notice anything. A victim could display one or more of the following:

- becomes withdrawn, anxious, lacking in confidence and is frightened to say what's wrong,
- has items of money 'lost' or 'go missing',
- has unexplained injuries,

- attempts, or displays signs of or discloses thoughts, on suicide or running away,
- begins to suddenly under-perform,
- becomes disruptive, aggressive or unreasonable and may start bullying others,
- changes their routine and/or stops eating,
- is afraid and/or nervous to use the internet/mobile phone and receive cyber messages/calls,
- give improbable excuses for any of the above.

All incidents should be reported using the Ball Hockey UK Bullying Incident Reporting Form. After completion, the form must be handed to the club president. The club president should then investigate the incident and then present the findings.

## Responding To Bullying

To enable an effective response BHUK and its member clubs will ensure that a clear approach is developed to deal with any allegations of bullying. We will:

- ensure that our players and coaches know how to report bullying behaviour.
- ensure we take every report of bullying seriously.
- ensure we keep a record of what has taken place and what action has been taken.
- ensure we stick to the facts.
- ensure that the Bullying Incident Reporting Form is completed.
- ensure that responses challenge and change the bullying behaviour, not try to change the person being bullied.
- ask whether the victim is at risk of harm.
- ask the victim what they want to happen.
- ask if outside agencies (police, social care) are to be notified.
- ask ourselves if our response to bullying is clear.
- don't stop until the incident is resolved – and then keep going.
- don't stop communicating.
- don't stop monitoring the situation to ensure that it does not reoccur.
- don't stop learning, changing and getting better at our response to bullying.

## Recommended Club Action

If a bullying allegation is made the club should decide if it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation and if so it should follow the procedure outlined below:

1. The first course of action is to discover if a simple reconciliation is possible, on occasion the aggressor is unaware of their actions and by having their behaviour highlighted a genuine apology may solve the problem.
2. If this fails or is not deemed appropriate the club should meet with the alleged victim (plus parent if appropriate) and minutes should be taken, which should be agreed by all as a true account.

3. The club should then meet with the alleged bully (and parent[s] if appropriate) and discuss the incident that has been highlighted and allow them to put their perspective on the allegation. Again it is essential that minutes are taken and agreed with all those present.

4. If, following an investigation, bullying has been deemed to have taken place the aggressor should be advised that if the bullying continues then either a temporary or permanent suspension will be outcome. It may also be appropriate at this point to consider whether a reconciliation meeting between the parties is appropriate.

5. The club will advise those involved with the coaching of the two parties about the outcome and consequences of repeat action.

## Outcomes

The ideal scenario would be for the two parties to reconcile and for the bully (bullies) to genuinely apologise. However, if this is not possible suspension or even exclusion will be considered. It is essential that following any investigation into an incident of bullying that each case is monitored and reported on to ensure that the bullying does not reoccur.

## Prevention

Each club is expected to have a written constitution, which will include the club's commitment to an anti-bullying policy. All club members and parents will agree to the terms of the constitution and sign to confirm their acceptance of it upon joining the club. Additionally, the club will raise awareness about bullying with all of its members and explain why prevention matters.

## Summary

Ball hockey is traditionally a sport where friendships are developed hand in hand with rivalries, respect is as important as the desire to win. It is a sport where clubs encourage and develop its members, however, care is needed to ensure that complacency does not ensue and everyone must remain vigilant and know what signs to spot of any bullying behaviour within their team. BHUK and all of our member clubs will take a strong stance against bullying and will let their members know that bullying is not going to be tolerated.

## Contact Details

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	0808 800 5793
Bullying Online	<a href="https://www.bullying.co.uk/">https://www.bullying.co.uk/</a>
Child Protection In Sport Unit	<a href="https://thecpsu.org.uk/">https://thecpsu.org.uk/</a>
KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline	0845 1205 204 / 0207 730 3300
KIDSCAPE website	<a href="https://www.kidscape.org.uk/">https://www.kidscape.org.uk/</a>
National Bullying Helpline	<a href="https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/">https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/</a>

Parentline Plus	0808 800 2222
Youth Access	0845 6002516

## Monitoring & Review

We are committed to reviewing our policies and good practice every three years or sooner if there are any changes in legislation or government guidance or as a result of any other significant change or event.

Policy Owner	Ball Hockey UK
Policy Title	Anti-Bullying & Harassment Policy
BHUK Contact Email	<a href="mailto:contactBHUK@gmail.com">contactBHUK@gmail.com</a>
BHUK Website	<a href="http://www.ballhockeyuk.com">www.ballhockeyuk.com</a>
BHUK President Name	Rob Clayton
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