

Overview

Forth Valley Disability Sport (FVDS) believes that every individual has the right to experience sport in a safe environment free from abuse and bullying.

This policy takes into consideration the Scottish Government funded anti bullying policy: respect me, Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service, managed in partnership with SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health), and LGBT Youth Scotland. For more information go to: <https://beta.gov.scot/publications/respect-national-approach-anti-bullying-scotlands-children-young-people/pages/2/>

Statement of Intent

Everyone has the right to participate in sport and leisure activities in an environment and culture where they feel respected, encouraged and safe from harm. Bullying is an issue which can arise within the sports environment and can breach these rights. As such, this policy has been implemented because FVDS is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all so they can participate in sport in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If bullying does occur, we want individuals to know who to tell in FVDS and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly, effectively and compassionately. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening understands why they need to tell the nominated FVDS representative at the time or report the matter to the FVDS at coordinator@fvds.org.uk or on 07484010633.

Objectives of this Policy

This policy is to make the approach taken by FVDS towards bullying clear so:

- Everyone has an understanding of what bullying is;
- Everyone knows what the FVDS policy is on bullying, and knows what to do if it arises and/or is reported;
- Everyone is assured that FVDS takes bullying seriously and has an understanding that they will be supported when bullying is reported. All complaints will be dealt with seriously, promptly and with confidentiality; and
- It is clear to all that FVDS will not tolerate bullying.

What Do We Mean By Environments?

For the purpose of this policy, an environment refers to the conditions (both physical and rules) set for controlling any sporting activity taking place. In this policy and context, an FVDS Controlled Environment means any occasion where the conditions are set and controlled by FVDS and, therefore, it is within the control of FVDS to change the conditions if necessary. A Non-FVDS Controlled Environment refers to any occasion where FVDS may be represented or have individual FVDS members, athletes, coaches or volunteers involved but the conditions are set by a third party i.e. a partner organisation.

What Is Harassment and Bullying?

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted or offensive conduct related to one of the following grounds (which are known as "protected characteristics");

- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- age;
- gender reassignment;
- race;
- disability;
- religion or belief.

Where the conduct affects an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This can include unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct. Such behaviour is unacceptable;

- where it is unwanted, unreasonable or offensive to the recipient;
- where it is used as the basis for an employment decision;
- where it creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive working environment.

Harassment often (but not exclusively) targets a protected characteristic of the victim. A person may also be harassed because of their relationship with someone else (through association) or because of others perception of them.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as aggressive, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, which makes (or intends to make) the recipient feel hurt, upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, undermines their self-confidence and suffer stress. Bullying can arise from a one-off incident or may happen repeatedly. Some examples of bullying are:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. threatening gestures);
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- Prejudiced - Based Bullying
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing; and/or
- Cyber – all areas of social media misuse, including abuse by text messaging and calls, misuse of camera and video technologies.

Awareness

FVDS hopes to avoid incidents of bullying and has taken proactive steps to outline in its code of conduct, and other policies relating to behaviour, what is acceptable and proper behaviour. All member Branches, staff, athletes, coaches and volunteers are given the opportunity to review these documents and agree to abide by the conduct set out in these documents. This includes this Anti-Bullying Policy. All these documents are readily available on the FVDS website so they can be referred to at any time.

In an FVDS controlled environment, FVDS will appoint an individual as the named contact (First Responder) for reporting all incidents of welfare concern, including bullying. Where possible and appropriate, this individual will attempt to manage and resolve the situation at the time.

Should it not be possible to report the concern to the FVDS appointed individual at the time, for whatever reason, then any concerns can be reported directly to the FVDS

Coordinator. Regardless of when the situation is resolved, all concerns will be reported to the FVDS Coordinator for the purposes of maintaining a record.

If anyone has a concern about welfare, including bullying, then please report this to the FVDS Coordinator at coordinator@fvds.org.uk or on 07484010633.

Procedure in an FVDS Controlled Environment

As with all matters relating to welfare and conduct in an FVDS controlled environment, the FVDS Procedure for Complaints, Concerns, Grievances, Disciplinary and Appeals can be found in detail within the FVDS Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policies and Procedures document.

In cases where welfare concerns, including bullying, involves individuals under 18 years of age, parents or guardians will be made aware of the incident and involved in the investigation and disciplinary process. Also, as outlined in the FVDS Procedure for Complaints, Concerns, Grievances, Disciplinary and Appeals, if the concerns are sufficient and it is deemed appropriate, Police Scotland will also be consulted and involved.

Procedure in a Non-SDS Controlled Environment

As with all matters relating to welfare and conduct, the FVDS Procedure for Complaints, Concerns, Grievances, Disciplinary and Appeals shall be followed. This means the handling of any bullying incident shall be dealt with as follows:

- Accessing a confidential contact – for non-FVDS Controlled Environments, there will not be an SDS nominated individual so please contact FVDS Coordinator at coordinator@fvds.org.uk or on 07484010633. Depending on the circumstances, FVDS may nominate an individual closer to you as a confidential contact for you to speak to and to help resolve the situation, if appropriate;
- Informal stage i.e. this can be a series of conversations, including mediation, to address behavioural concerns with the relevant parties. This can be facilitated by FVDS or by the body responsible for the occasion, depending on what is deemed appropriate by the FVDS Coordinator; and
- Formal stage i.e. an investigation, managed by the FVDS Coordinator, to report on findings and agree the actions that need to be taken to address any behavioural concerns and reduce the chance of repeated incidents. In non-FVDS Controlled Environments, actions available to FVDS relating to the environment will be limited.

In cases where bullying involves individuals under 18 years of age, parents or guardians will be made aware of the incident and involved in the investigation and disciplinary process and, as outlined in the FVDS Procedure for Complaints, Concerns, Grievances, Disciplinary and Appeals, if the concerns are sufficient and it is deemed appropriate, Police Scotland will also be consulted and involved.

Taking Action

As outlined earlier, the FVDS Procedure for Complaints, Concerns, Grievances, Disciplinary and Appeals outlines the process to be followed and type of action available. When deemed appropriate by the nominated FVDS representative, action will be taken to address matters in the following order:

- Preventative measures to reduce the risk of that individual suffering from any further bullying (these may be limited in Non-FVDS Controlled Environments); then
- Action to address the conduct of the individual(s) displaying bullying behaviour.

Preventative Measures

Preventative measures shall be viewed with regards to:

- Immediate changes – these can include a change of process, room sharing for a squad session, etc; and
- Long-term changes – taking note of any incidents and, where possible and practicable, putting in place plans to reduce the risk of future bullying at the club, event or squad session.

Action

When addressing the conduct of the individual(s) displaying bullying behaviour, the following is a non-exhaustive list providing examples of actions that could be taken to help prevent, or react to, incidents of bullying:

- Holding a reconciliation meeting between parties at an appropriate time;
 - For those under the age of 18, the parent of the child displaying bullying behaviour, or the bullied individual can be asked to attend events, club or squad sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate;
 - Supporting those displaying bullying behaviour to change their behaviour;
 - Holding a session with the squad or event attendees to review what is and is not appropriate behaviour (only applicable in an SDS Controlled Environment);
 - Working to improve procedures and processes for managing/responding to concerns;
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- Further/increased monitoring to ensure repeated bullying behaviour does not take place;
 - The individual(s) displaying bullying behaviour receives a verbal warning;
 - The individual(s) displaying bullying behaviour receives a written warning;
 - The individual(s) displaying bullying behaviour receives a final written warning;
 - The individual(s) displaying bullying behaviour is withdrawn from the club, event or squad session;
 - The individual(s) displaying bullying behaviour is suspended from taking part in SDS events or squad sessions for a period of time; and/or

When deciding on what action to take, those involved in the decision will be informed if any individual displaying bullying behaviour in this incident has had previous incidents relating to their conduct, including the nature and action taken at the time, to help determine what action should be taken on this occasion.

Where appropriate, coaches, volunteers or club officials involved with any of the individuals, will be made aware of any incidents and action taken to help with the monitoring and management of any behaviour.

Written Records

For matters where the procedure does not proceed beyond the informal stage, the following summary information will be collected by the FVDS Coordinator from the FVDS Lead Female or Male Safeguarding contact:

- Summary of incident, including the names of those involved;
- Summary of the informal investigation process to corroborate information; and
- Summary of what action, changes and which people/bodies were informed and when, if any.

For matters advancing to the formal stage, more detailed information on the incident and subsequent action taken will be captured in the report produced by the investigator and the minutes from the group tasked with reviewing the evidence and agreeing on the action to be taken.

Any information collected from the informal or formal stage will be kept confidential, stored securely and stored indefinitely, only to be used when the individual(s) involved have been deemed to have displaying undesirable conduct on a future occasion or as part of a future Police investigation.

Further Advice

For further advice or to discuss any concerns please contact the FVDS Lead Safeguarding contact coordinator@fvds.org.uk or on 07484010633.