



Anti-Bullying Policy for Baseball and Softball

**Baseball • كرت
Softball UK**

Tel. 020 7453 7055
Email. welfare@bsuk.com
www.bsuk.com

190 Great Dover Street
London
SE1 4YB

BSUK Anti Bullying Policy

Introduction

Sport can and does have a powerful and positive influence on its participants, especially young people. Not only can it provide opportunities for enjoyment and achievement, it can also develop valuable qualities such as self-esteem, leadership and teamwork. These positive effects can only take place if sport is in the hands of those who place the welfare of all participants first and adopt practices that support, protect and empower them.

The reality, however, is that abuse does sometimes take place in sport, and in some cases coaches and other trusted adults in sport have been convicted of criminal offences and/or disciplined by their National Governing Body (NGB).

The British Baseball Federation (BBF), the British Softball Federation (BSF) and BaseballSoftballUK (BSUK) are committed to working together and in partnership with all relevant agencies to ensure that we fulfil our legal and moral obligations to safeguard and promote the welfare of all participants, and specifically young people.

This Anti-Bullying Policy is mandatory for all BBF, BSF and BSUK officials, staff and members, and for members of all affiliated organisations when engaged in baseball and softball activities with young people. You are expected to adopt, implement and actively promote all aspects of this Anti-Bullying Policy.

The club or organisation will:

- Recognise its duty of care and responsibility to safeguard all participants from harm.
- Promote and implement this Anti-Bullying Policy in addition to our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Seek to ensure that bullying behaviour is not accepted or condoned.
- Require all members of the club/organisation to be given information about, and sign up to, this Policy.
- Take action to investigate and respond to any alleged incidents of bullying.
- Encourage and facilitate children and young people to play an active part in developing and adopting a code of conduct to address bullying.
- Ensure that coaches are given access to information, guidance and/or training on bullying.

Each participant, coach, volunteer or official will:

- Respect every child's need for, and right to, a play environment where safety, security, praise, recognition and opportunity for taking responsibility are available.
- Respect the feelings and views of others.
- Recognise that everyone is important and that our differences make each of us special and should be valued.
- Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions and progress.
- Be committed to the early identification of bullying, and prompt and collective action to deal with it.
- Ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see.
- Report any incidents of bullying they see. By doing nothing you are condoning bullying.

Bullying

- All forms of bullying will be addressed
- Everybody in the club/organisation has a responsibility to work together to stop bullying.
- Bullying can include online as well as off-line behaviour.
- Bullying can include:
 - physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc;
 - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation or the continual ignoring of individuals;
 - posting derogatory or abusive comments, videos or images on social network sites;
 - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures or sectarianism;
 - sexual comments, suggestions or behaviour;
 - and unwanted physical contact.

Children with a disability or who are from ethnic minorities, as well as young people who are gay or lesbian or those with learning difficulties are more vulnerable to these forms of abuse and are more likely to be targeted.

Support to the child

- Children should know who will listen to and support them.
- Systems should be established to open the door to children wishing to talk about bullying or any other issue that affects them.
- Potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child's disability or impairment) need to be identified and addressed at the outset to enable children to approach adults for help.
- Children should have access to Helpline numbers.
- Anyone who reports an incident of bullying should be listened to carefully and be supported.
- Any reported incident of bullying should be investigated objectively, including listening carefully to all those involved.
- Children being bullied should be supported and assisted to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development.
- Those who bully should be supported and encouraged to stop bullying.
- Sanctions for those bullying others that involve long periods of isolation, or which diminish and make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others, should be avoided.

Support to parents/guardians

- Parents/guardians should be advised about the club/organisation's bullying policy and practice.
- Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child's parent(s)/guardians.
- Parents will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and bully) and agreements made as to what that action should be.
- Information and advice on coping with bullying will be made available.
- Support should be offered to parent(s), including information on other agencies or support lines.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying in sport

- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.

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- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns (it is believed that up to 12 children each year commit suicide as a result of bullying, so if anyone talks about or threatens suicide, seek professional help immediately). Help victims to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
 - Investigate all allegations and take action to ensure the victim is safe. Speak with the victim and the bully(ies) separately.
 - Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to keep what has happened a secret.
 - Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when, where).
 - Report any concerns to the Club Safeguarding Officer or the school (wherever the bullying is occurring).

Action towards the bully(ies)

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully(ies)'s parents.
- Provide support for the victim's coach.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families concerned to report on progress.
- Inform all members of the organisation of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.
- Most 'low level' incidents will be dealt with at the time by coaches and volunteers. However, if the bullying is severe (e.g. a serious assault), or if it persists despite efforts to deal with it, incidents should be referred to the designated Club Safeguarding Officer as in 'Responding to suspicions or allegations' below.

Responding to allegations or suspicions

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in baseball or softball to decide whether child abuse has or is taking place. However, there is a responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting these to the appropriate officer or the appropriate authorities.

The BBF, the BSF and BSUK will assure all staff/volunteers that it will fully support and protect anyone who in good faith reports a concern they may have about a child or an adult's behavior towards a child.