

# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



For Official Use Only

Mountaineering Ireland Version Control			
Version	Author	Date	Amendments
1.0	Catherine Hibbitt	August 2023	Reviewed
Approved by Board: 04/09/23			



**NGB:** Mountaineering Ireland

**Club Name:**

## Introduction

Bullying is one of the most common forms of abuse. The British Mountaineering Council states that it would not be too unrealistic to conclude that most people have been a victim of bullying in some form at one time or another. And how for some children bullying can be taken to the extreme and can make their lives intolerable. Bullying is something that needs to be taken very seriously. It is not acceptable for adults to dismiss bullying as a simple part of growing up. There is sufficient evidence to show that the consequences of bullying can be devastating both to the victim and their family.

Our anti-bullying policy sets out how we feel about bullying behaviour in the club and our organisation, what we will do to tackle it and how we will support children and young people who experience or display bullying behaviour.

## What is Bullying?

“Bullying is in-person and online behaviour between children and young people within a social network that causes physical, emotional, or social harm to targeted young people. It is characterized by an imbalance of power that is enabled or inhibited by the social and institutional norms and context of schools/organisations and the education system. Bullying implies an absence of effective responses and care towards the target by peers and adults.”

UNESCO, 2020

Bullying can take many forms, including:

### 1. Verbal bullying

- ✚ Teasing, jeering, name calling, slagging, insults, mimicking, malicious rumours, sexist slurs, spreading rumours, offensive comments, sexual comments, and suggestions.

### 2. Physical bullying

- ✚ Fighting, hitting, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, invasion of personal space, crowding an individual or group, unwanted physical contact.

### 3. Emotional bullying

- ✚ Persistent negative feedback, overly critical, shaming and humiliation, threatening behaviour, put-downs, and belittling, ignoring and exclusion from a group, undermining and dismissing, distorting your perceptions and thoughts.

### 4. Gesture bullying

- ✚ Threatening signs, dirty looks, intimidating gestures, offensive and obscene hand signals.

### 5. Exclusion bullying

- ✚ Leaving someone out as deliberate exclusion, being shunned, isolation, ignoring a person/group on purpose.

### 6. Extortion bullying

- ✚ Forcing someone to do something they do not want to do, blackmailing, threatening, demands for money/possessions/food/equipment etc, being dared, or forced to steal.

### 7. Damage to property

- ✚ Personal property being defaced, broken, stolen, or hidden, damage to clothing, mobile phones, or other devices.

### 8. Cyber-bullying

- ✚ Bullying through the use of webpages, social media and online gaming, intimidating messages through email or messenger services, and spreading rumours or promoting exclusion through online activities, the posting of

derogatory and/or abusive comments, videos or images on social media, online trolling.

### 9. Prejudice based bullying

- ✚ Homophobic, transphobic, or racist behaviours including racially aggravated remarks, name-calling, and racial exclusion.

#### Bullying can occur between:

**Child to child:** physical aggression, verbal bullying, intimidation, damage to property and isolation

**Adult to child** includes the repeated use of gestures or expressions of a threatening or intimidatory nature or any comment intended to degrade the child.

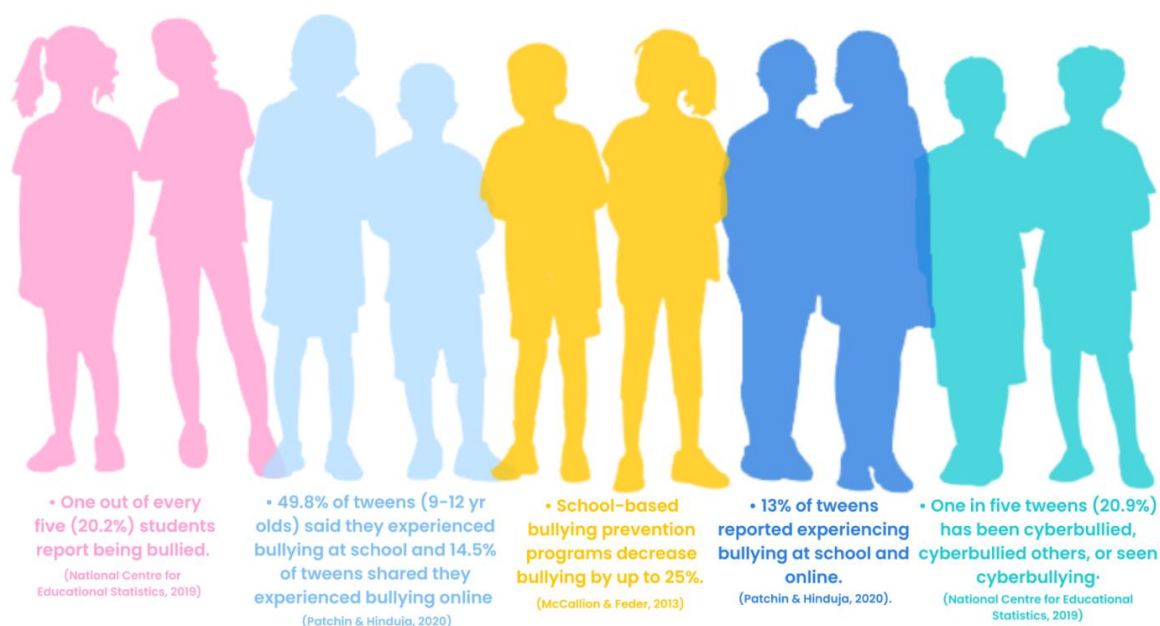
**Child to adult** includes the use of repeated gestures or expressions of threatening or intimidatory nature by an individual child or group of children.

#### Signs of Bullying

In most cases, children will display signs that they are being bullied. It is important to be aware of these signs and to investigate such circumstances such as:

- ✚ A child no longer wanting to attend training sessions or club events.
- ✚ A child is afraid to walk to or from training or club events.
- ✚ A child has changed behaviour and has become withdrawn.
- ✚ A child is starting to underperform or have a severe dip in performance.
- ✚ A child attempts suicide or runs away from home.
- ✚ A child is repeatedly seeking money or is starting to steal money.
- ✚ A child has unexplained injuries.
- ✚ A child has started to become aggressive and/or disruptive within your club.
- ✚ A child has started bullying other children.
- ✚ A child does not want to talk about why their behaviour has changed.
- ✚ A child appears nervous when using their phone.

Whilst these are potential indicators of bullying, it is possible that these may be indicators of other issues such as the child being child abuse as identified within **Mountaineering Irelands Recognising and Reporting Child Abuse Policy**. It is important though to consider bullying as a reason for these behaviours.



source: <https://www.ispcc.ie/shield-anti-bullying-programme/>

### Impact of Bullying

Those who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and may thus become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of their self-esteem. Some effects of bullying include:

- ✚ Stress.
- ✚ Reduced ability to concentrate.
- ✚ Lack of Motivation or energy.
- ✚ Poor or deteriorating performance.
- ✚ Inability to take any criticism.
- ✚ Reluctance to use changing rooms/dashing out before the group.
- ✚ Anxiety about going to the club/group.
- ✚ Loss of confidence/Self-esteem.

- ✚ Aggressive behaviour.
- ✚ Depression.
- ✚ Panic attacks.
- ✚ Nervous breakdown.
- ✚ Attempted Suicide.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a person is being bullied, however if repeated or occurring in combination these signs do warrant concern as to what is affecting the individual.

### **Clubs should strive to provide a place where:**

- ✚ Name calling will not be tolerated.
- ✚ No one suffers abuse of any nature.
- ✚ No one is victimised.
- ✚ Each member is supported and listened to.
- ✚ All members are treated equally.
- ✚ Solutions to problems are the concern of all.

### **Preventing Bullying**

- ✚ As a club you must recognise your duty of care and responsibility to safeguard children, young people, and vulnerable adults from harm.
- ✚ Require all members of the club to sign up to **Mountaineering Irelands Anti-Bullying Policy**.
- ✚ Having a proactive approach can prevent bullying from occurring within the club.
- ✚ Be committed to ensure the safety and security of all players – good supervision numbers make it hard for bullying behaviour to go unnoticed.
- ✚ Encourage an awareness of what bullying is and how to avoid it.
- ✚ Establish Codes of Conduct - Encourage young people to contribute to the rules about behaviour and reinforce anti-bullying messages by adults leading by example in their behaviour.

- ✚ Encourage a 'permission to share' culture that allow children and young people to raise their concerns.
- ✚ Encourage a mature and measured attitude towards bullying so that your members know how to respond effectively. Bullying should always be considered in conjunction with the Codes of Conduct. Poor practice should always be tackled early.
- ✚ Encourage the group to come forward with any future concerns – this will reinforce the message that bullying in whatever form is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Persistent poor practice may escalate into severe bullying if allowed to go unchecked.
- ✚ Aim to complete the following Anti-Bullying Activities within your club [CPSU \(Child Protection in Sport Unit\) Anti-bullying Activities for Clubs with Children and Young People](#)
- ✚ As a club you may consider working through the new ISPCC Shield Anti-Bullying Programme which is a part of Mountaineering Irelands Safeguarding Plan. See Appendix 1.

**Each participant, coach, volunteer will:**

- ✓ Encourage individuals to speak out about bullying behaviour.
- ✓ Respect every child's need for, and right to, a play environment where safety, security, and praise are adopted and promoted.
- ✓ Respect the feelings and views of others.
- ✓ Recognise that everyone is important and equal, and that our differences make each of us special and worthy of being valued.
- ✓ Show appreciation of others by acknowledging individual qualities, contributions, and progress.
- ✓ Ensure safety by having rules and practices carefully explained and displayed for all to see.
- ✓ Report incidents of buying behaviour they see – by doing nothing you are condoning the behaviour.

**Supporting Children as a Club:**

- ✓ We will let children know who will listen to and support them.
- ✓ We will create an “open door” ethos where children feel confident to talk to an adult about bullying behaviour or any other issue that affects them.
- ✓ Potential barriers to talking (including those associated with a child’s disability or impairment) will be acknowledged and addressed at the outset to enable children to speak out.
- ✓ We will make sure children are aware of helpline numbers.
- ✓ Anyone who reports an incident of bullying will be listened to carefully and reports will be taken seriously.
- ✓ Any reported experience of bullying will be investigated and will involve listening carefully to all those involved.
- ✓ Children experiencing bullying will be supported and helped to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment.
- ✓ Those who display bullying behaviour will be supported and encouraged to develop better relationships.
- ✓ We will make sure that sanctions are proportionate and fair.

**Support for Parents:**

- ✓ Parents will be advised on the club’s bullying policy and practice.
- ✓ Any experience of bullying behaviour will be discussed with the child's parents.
- ✓ Parents will be consulted on action to be taken (for both victim and child displaying the bullying behaviour) and we will agree on these actions together.
- ✓ Information and advice on coping with bullying will be made available.
- ✓ Support will be offered to parents, including information from other agencies or support lines.






### Responding to Bullying

- ✓ When bullying arises within a group situation use the 'no-blame' approach, see appendix 2.
- ✓ Assure the victim that nothing is wrong with them, and it is not their fault and reassure them that they are right to tell.
- ✓ Safeguarding Officer/Club Children's Officer/Responsible Adult should keep the young person informed of proposed action and take into account any fears they have about proposed action.

You may be able to stop a bullying issue by asking questions informally. It may be a question of managing the group differently or increasing supervision in particular places or at particular times. Remember most people who are being bullied just want it to stop, they are not overly concerned with punishing the bully – make that the focus when dealing with the problem. Initially try to sort out the problem within the group without identifying any particular person or action – through group discussion on bullying. This is adopting a 'no blame' approach.

#### Make it clear that:

-  The behaviour was wrong.
  -  They now know it to be wrong.
  -  It will no longer be tolerated and if continued, will be sanctioned.
- ✓ Protect the bullied child while giving the bully an opportunity to change their behaviour.
  - ✓ Avoid sanctions which involved lengthy periods of isolation, or which make individuals look or feel foolish in front of others.
  - ✓ The chairperson of the club and/or the club children's officer should be informed of any incident so that policies and practices can be reviewed on a regular basis.
  - ✓ If suspected bullying is of a serious nature – this should be discussed with the National Children's Officer.

- ✓ If bullying is putting any young person in immediate danger this should be reported to the Gardai/PSNI/Statutory Authorities – this can be done through the clubs Designated Liaison Person or Mountaineering Ireland’s National Children’s Officer.

**In the event of a child or young person being bullied by an adult the following should be the procedure followed:**

1. It should be made known by the Children’s Officer/Responsible Person to the adult concerned about what has been reported.
2. The adult should be reminded of the Code of Conduct.
3. The adult should be allowed to incorporate a change in their behaviour.
4. If the adult fails to do so, then disciplinary action can be taken in line with the **Mountaineering Ireland Complaints & Disciplinary Policy.**
5. The Children’s Officer should speak to the Juvenile and their parent(s)/guardian to assure them the situation has been dealt with.

**What can you do if your being bullied? (Source: [www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie) )**

- ✚ Talk to someone you trust, this may be a friend, a family member, a coach, or a teacher. They will be able to advise you and they will take further action to address the bullying.
- ✚ Report the bully to someone you trust. If you are experiencing cyberbullying, you can report it to the relevant platform. Some forms of cyberbullying are illegal including inappropriate sexual suggestions and comments, racist remarks, distribution, or publication of intimate images without consent, harassment, and any form of persistent bullying. In cases that could be illegal, you can report the bullying to the Gardaí.
- ✚ Look after yourself. You may need extra care and support. Self-care is important during this challenging time.
- ✚ Find support through organisations that offer free and confidential support and counselling to those that are being bullied. You will find a list of such services below.

**50808**

A free 24/7 text message support service providing calm chats  
to immediate supports for young people.

**Appendix 1: The ISPCC Shield Anti-Bullying Programme**



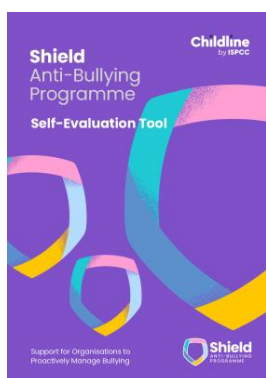
Your club may wish to sign up to the new ISPCC Shield Anti-Bullying Programme which endeavours to support organisations to proactively manage bullying through prevention and intervention strategies.

The Shield programme encompasses an online self-evaluation tool. By reflecting on ten Shield Statements and associated

questions, you will be able to identify your clubs’ areas of strength and areas needing more development in your approach to bullying.

The Shield Self Evaluation Tool and registration is available [here](#).

**Upon achieving Shield Status, an organisation will receive:**



Access to the most up to-date research and a library of supporting materials/videos and lesson plans which will be continuously updated. A Shield graphic for display on your organisation’s website. Certificate of your organisation’s achievement. Letter template to announce the attainment of your Shield Status to parents/caregivers. Recognition on [www.ispcc.ie](http://www.ispcc.ie).

**Appendix 2: What is the 'No Blame Approach'?**

The “No Blame” approach is a whole-group process intended to address bullying by drawing together the victim and the bully in an effort to explore the inter-relationship between them and its impact i.e., not ‘bullying the bully’ but working with bullies and the whole group to create understanding of the hurt being caused, and to make the problem a ‘shared concern’ of the group.

**Step 1: Discuss with the victim:**

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling. Actively listen to the individual.

Think about following questions:

- ✚ Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- ✚ How hurt is the victim?
- ✚ Was it within his/her peer group?

**Step 2: Meet with all involved:**

- ✚ Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.
- ✚ Have a maximum of 6-8 in the group so that it is manageable.
- ✚ Make a point of calling a ‘special meeting.’
- ✚ Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all.
- ✚ Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim.
- ✚ Play on the conscience of all and ask questions like: how do you feel? Would you like this done to you?

**Step 3: Explain the problem:**

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage, the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Listen and watch out for reactions and notice any without isolating anyone. Try asking questions:

- ✚ How would you feel if this happened to you?
- ✚ Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what can we do to see that it does not happen again?

**Step 4: Share the responsibility:**

Explain what steps / controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out as a result.

**Step 5: Ask the group for their ideas:**

At this stage, the group is encouraged to suggest ways that would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases “if it were you” to encourage a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them.

**Step 6: Leave it to the group:**

Now the problem has been identified and solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week’s time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a period within which to find a resolution to the issue.

**Step 7: Meet again:**

Each member of the group, including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and keeps all involved in the process. Again, enforce the idea of the ‘team’ looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying and intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">1</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em;">✚</p> <p><b>Interview victim about how they are feeling.</b></p> <p>When the member of staff finds out that the bullying has happened they will talk to the victim.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">2</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em;">✚</p> <p><b>Meeting with the people involved.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">✚</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">3</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em;">✚</p> <p><b>Explain the problem.</b></p> <p>Tell the group about the way the victim is feeling. No details are discussed.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">4</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em;">✚</p> <p><b>Share responsibility - ‘no blame’.</b></p> <p>Blame is not given to anyone but the group are informed that they do have a responsibility and they can do something to help.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✚</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">5</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em;">✚</p> <p><b>Suggestions.</b></p> <p>Group members are encouraged to make suggestions as to how they can help make the victims time in school better.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">6</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em;">✚</p> <p><b>Leave it up to them.</b></p> <p>The responsibility is passed over to the group to solve the problem. The member of staff arranges to meet with the group to see how things are going.</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">7</p> <p style="font-size: 1.5em;">✚</p> <p><b>Meet again for individual interviews.</b></p> <p>About a week later the member of staff discusses with each student, including the victim, how things have been going. This helps to monitor the bullying and keep all the individuals involved.</p>
--	---	--	---	---	--	---



## Sample Anti Bullying Report Form

Incident details			
Date of incident		Time of incident	
Location / event			
Where did the incident occur?	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports playing area <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):	<input type="checkbox"/> Changing rooms	<input type="checkbox"/> Toilet
Nature / type of incident	<input type="checkbox"/> Extortion <input type="checkbox"/> Isolation – being ignored or left out <input type="checkbox"/> Physical – being hit or hurt <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal – name-calling, taunting, mocking, threatening <input type="checkbox"/> Spreading rumours		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Written <input type="checkbox"/> Possessions – kit taken or damaged <input type="checkbox"/> Forced into actions against will / hazing <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber – online, social media, email, text, posting photos / videos <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):		
Are there indications that the incident was motivated by any of these? Tick all that apply	<input type="checkbox"/> General appearance / demeanour <input type="checkbox"/> Disability / SEN <input type="checkbox"/> Gender / sexism <input type="checkbox"/> Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> Race / ethnic origin <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Home circumstances <input type="checkbox"/> Sports ability	

Individuals involved				
	Name	Gender*	Age	Role*
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
* Gender: <b>F</b> – Female / <b>M</b> – Male / <b>NB</b> – Non-binary / Another – please write in				
* Role: <b>V</b> – Victim / <b>R</b> – Ringleader / <b>A</b> – Associate / <b>B</b> – Bystander				

Summary of incident(s)

Action taken
Include any sanctions, exclusions, parental involvement, or involvement with external agencies.
Overall (include details if incident was referred on)
With each individual involved (noted on page 1)

Declaration	
Form completed by (print your name)	
Your signature	
Today's date	

### Further Supports

Anti-Bullying Alliance - <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information>

Child Protection in Sport Unit - <https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/anti-bullying/>

Childline ROI – <https://www.childline.ie/bullying-abuse-safety-and-your-rights/>

Childline UK - <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/>

Kidscape - <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

Sticks & Stones – [www.sticksandstones.ie](http://www.sticksandstones.ie)

Spunout - <https://spunout.ie/category/life/bullying>

Tacklebullying.ie - <https://tacklebullying.ie/>

Teenline – 1800 833 634, a 24/7 national active listening service in Ireland.

Webwise – [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie)

iCoachKids - [www.icoachkids.eu/safeguarding-and-protecting-children-in-sport.html](http://www.icoachkids.eu/safeguarding-and-protecting-children-in-sport.html)