

INTRODUCTION

It is the Policy of The RTRC to safeguard children taking part in Rowing, Boating and other marine activities from physical, sexual and emotional harm. The RTRC considers bullying of any kind unacceptable within youth activities under its control. A child is defined as being any person under the age of 18.

This document sets out what The RTRC means by bullying, how we feel about bullying how you can recognise it and what the RTRC will do to tackle it and how we'll support children and young people who experience or display bullying behaviour as well as what to do about it if you think bullying might be happening.

OBJECTIVES:

The objective of this Policy is to prevent bullying occurring, but if it does, to provide a mechanism where it can be quickly brought to the attention of nominated individuals who can investigate the situation and work with both the victim and the bully in order to resolve the problem.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

- Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person.
The three key bullying behaviours are:
- It does not just happen once; it is ongoing over time.
- It is deliberate and intentional- it is not accidentally hurting someone.
- It is unfair/there is an unequal power balance (imbalance of power). The person/people doing the bullying is/are stronger, or there are more of them or they have 'influence' (higher status or power).

Bullying can be:

- *Emotional*; being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg. hiding possessions gear or equipment, threatening gestures)
- *Physical*; pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- *Racist*; racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- *Sexual*; unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- *Homophobic*; because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- *Verbal*; name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

Why is it important to Respond to Bullying?

- Bullying hurts and no one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- Bullying is often a call for help by the person showing bullying behaviours. They need help both to learn different ways of behaving and to understand the reason that it is unacceptable.
- It is often symptomatic of other issues which they may need help with. Therefore promptly informing an appropriate person about these behaviours helps everyone.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING:

- A child's behaviour may be indicative that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:
- Is frightened of being left alone with other children.
- Changes their usual routine.
- Suddenly doesn't wish to attend training or events.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence.
- Starts stammering.
- Has cuts or bruises that can not adequately be explained.
- Attempts or threatens suicide.

- Attempts or threatens to run away.
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares.
- Feels ill in the mornings.
- Begins to perform poorly without good reason.
- Comes home with clothes torn or belongings damaged.
- Has possessions suddenly start go missing.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (e.g. to give to the bully)
- Continually 'loses' money.
- Become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Is bullying other children or siblings.
- Stops eating.
- Is frightened to say what is wrong.
- Gives improbable excuses or reasons for any of the above.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

PROCEDURES

- If anyone, either rower or adult, suspects that bullying is taking place it is expected of them that they inform an appropriate person.
- This person will then follow the procedure laid down in the RTRC Child Protection Policy and Guidelines.
- Informing an appropriate person that you suspect bullying when you have genuine grounds will not result in disciplinary action against you and the bully will not be informed of your identity without your consent.
- Being found to know of bullying without reporting it is a disciplinary offence.

OUTCOMES

- All interviews will be conducted under Best Practice Guidelines, which includes all children being accompanied by a parent or responsible adult.
- The child who is bullying will be asked to explain his or her behaviour and consider the consequences of it both to themselves and others. They may be asked to genuinely apologise. If possible the children will be reconciled.
- It may be recommended that the child seek the help of Professional Health Counsellors to deal with their behaviour.
- Depending on the severity of the case suspension or exclusion of the bully(ies), from events and/or crews, might be necessary.
- After the incident or incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- All incidents will be reported to the RTRC Welfare officer and kept on record to monitor any future reports.

PREVENTION

- This Policy has been adopted by the RTRC and is available to all as a reference via the website.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy will be made available to all leads and event organisers.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Policy will be monitored and reviewed annually by The RTRC Management and Designated Person.