



## Anti-Bullying Policy for Stratford upon Avon AC

This policy runs concurrently with the SUAAC Safeguarding Policy

February 2022

### Stratford upon Avon AC Anti Bullying Policy

Bullying hurts either mentally or physically and no one deserves to be a victim of bullying and everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Therefore, it is the policy of Stratford upon Avon AC to ensure, so far as reasonably possible, that allegations of bullying will be dealt with efficiently and effectively in a timely way for all athletes and volunteers engaged in training and competition with the club.

### Statement of Intent

- Stratford upon Avon AC are committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for all members to practise athletics as an inclusive sport where everyone belongs and can flourish. Bullying of any kind, both face-to-face and online, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
- All committee members, coaches, athletes, parents and club members should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All committee members, athletes, junior parents/guardians and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported and what they should do if bullying arises.
- If bullying does occur, all athletes or parents of juniors should tell relevant club personnel and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club welfare officer, Age Group Leader (juniors), senior leaders or any committee member.

### Responsibility

- Ultimately it is the responsibility of the respective Executive committee member of the various sections of the club to ensure the Anti Bullying policy is communicated to all members, especially coaches and that it is adhered to.
- Athletics is a varied sport i.e. track, road and field and therefore, requires different approaches but responsibilities remain the same.
- Equally this puts the responsibility on coaches and group leaders to ensure a listening and compassionate environment is created to enable all athletes and volunteers engaged in training and competition with the club to come forward.
- The Anti Bullying policy must be included in the "Welcome Pack" for new members and included on the SUAAC website.
- The policy is to be reviewed annually by the Club Secretary with the Club Welfare Officers. The Exec committee shall then approve, where appropriate, any changes, and the revised policy communicated via the SUAAC Newsletter and on the website and the "Welcome Pack".

#### **SUAAC Club Welfare Officers:**

- **Juniors: Alison Gravelsons**
- **Seniors: Tony Jackson and Sarah Bland**

## Definition of Bullying (not exhaustive)

Bullying is the behaviour of an individual or group repeated over time that internationally hurts another person or group of people. Bullying can result in feelings of embarrassment, pain and distress and can also make a person feel afraid. If left unaddressed, bullying can have devastating effects on a person's mental health at the time the bullying occurred but also throughout their lifetime.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages or social media comments/emojis, tormenting, (e.g. hiding spikes/clothing, threatening gestures), humiliation or intimidation
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Gender e.g. homophobic/biphobic/transphobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality and gender
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, shouting abusive comments

NB – these are just examples and not an exhaustive list of the various actions that can be construed as bullying.

## Signs of Bullying

A person may indicate by direct contact, signs or behaviour that he/she/they, is being bullied and coaches/leaders or junior parents/guardians should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a person says he/she/they is being bullied

- is unwilling to go to club sessions
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence and self-esteem
- feels ill before training sessions
- comes home with clothes torn or athletics equipment damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- has changes to sleeping and/or eating patterns
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases:-

- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying another person or siblings
- stops eating or overeats
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

## Dealing with allegations of Bullying

- SUAAC has a responsibility to respond promptly, and effectively, to issues of bullying and initially an attempt at reconciliation, by getting the relevant parties together. It may be a genuine apology solves the problem.
- If this fails, or is not appropriate, a small panel (made up from Chairman, Welfare Officer, Secretary, committee members) should meet with the person alleging bullying, and in the case of a junior member their parent / guardian, to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
- The same club representatives should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s, and put the incident raised, to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should, again, be taken and agreed.
- If bullying has, in the view of the club officials, taken place, the athletes should be warned and put on notice of potential further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension, if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
- All coaches, involved with both parties, should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning and the club committee and coaches/leaders should monitor the situation for a given period, to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
- If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue, the club will initiate disciplinary action, under the club constitution.
- More serious cases may be referred to UK Athletics who will advise on action to be taken and this may involving the police or social services

### What Can We All Do To Prevent Bullying?

- Develop positive relationships amongst children, young people and adults which are mutually respectful, responsible and trusting
- Build capacity, resilience and skills in children and young people and parents/guardians to prevent and deal with bullying
- Prevent bullying through a range of strategies and approaches
- Support everyone affected by bullying

### Related SUAAC Policies and Procedures

Child Safeguarding Policy

Codes of Conduct

EA Discipline and Grievance Policy

Adult Safeguarding Policy

UKA Equity Diversity and Inclusion Policy

EA Complaints Policy

### Useful Contacts

#### SUAAC Club Welfare Officers:

Juniors: Alison Gravelsons    Seniors: Tony Jackson and Sarah Bland

UKA 07920 532553 / [safeguarding@uka.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@uka.org.uk)

Childline 0800 1111 / [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Kidscape 0207 7303300 / [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

Anti-Bullying Alliance [www.antibullyingalliance.org](http://www.antibullyingalliance.org)

EA [welfare@englandathletics.org](mailto:welfare@englandathletics.org)

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000