



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Letterkenny Blaze Basketball Club

This Policy was developed by Letterkenny Blaze Basketball Club in collaboration with committee members and coaches, parents and players.

1. Key Principals Underlining this Policy

Letterkenny Blaze Basketball Club is committed to the highest possible standard of good practice. The club recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact it can have on players and adults within the club. The club is fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behavior:

- A positive club culture and climate which:
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
 - encourages players to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment with their coach
 - promotes respectful relationships across the club
- Effective leadership from coaches and committee members
- A club wide approach to best practice in preventing bullying behaviour
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- Effective supervision and monitoring of players during training, travelling to games and during away trips
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behavior. See template Appendix A.
- On-going review of the effectiveness of this Anti-Bullying Policy.

2. Definition of Bullying and Description of Bullying Behaviour

The below definition of Bullying is adopted from the definition from the Department of Education 2022. Alleged incidents of bullying are often complex and must be considered on a case by case basis. There are many different methods of bullying behaviour including:

- physical
- verbal
- relational forms

and it can take place online and offline.

There are also many different motives for bullying behaviour which can be understood on an individual level (for example desire for dominance, status, revenge) and/or on a societal level (for example identity based bullying such as racist, disablist, sexist or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (one's sexual or gender identity), and intersex (LGBTQI+ bullying).

Bullying behaviour is often strongly influenced by attitudes, behaviours, norms and power dynamics that are deeply engrained in our society.

The core elements of the definition are further described below:

A. Targeted behavior

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the child or young person displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long term negative impact on the child or young person experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the child or young person experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other child or young person, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the club Code of Conduct.

B. Repeated behaviour Bullying

Bullying can take the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying, but must still be addressed under the club Code of Conduct. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can however be seen as bullying behaviour. Please also see Letterkenny Blaze Club Social Media Policy for more information.

C. Imbalance of power In incidents of bullying

The child or young person experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted person to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

3. Who Is Responsible For Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is the responsibility of all in the club especially the lead coach of the particular group in which bullying behaviour occurs. The Club Children's officer can be contacted for advice when dealing with issues which will be dealt with confidentially. In more extreme cases bullying will be reported to the Club Designated Liaison person (DLP) who will contact TUSLA or an Garda Siochana. (Please see Blaze Club website for information and contact details of club committee members).

4. Prevention Strategies

The prevention strategies that will be used by the club are as follows:

- All players, coaches and parents are asked to follow the various Club Code of Conduct available on the download section of the Clubs website.
- Coaches are encouraged to use positive behaviour management strategies - See Guidelines for Positive Behaviour Management for more information which is posted on download section of the club website and shared annually with coaches.
- This policy along with procedures listed below will be raised with parents, coaches and players on a regular basis, particularly at the “Welcome Back” Parent- Coaches meeting held at the beginning of the season.
- Blaze Basketball Club promotes a ‘telling club’ encouraging all to report incidences of bullying as soon as they arise. We encourage all impacted to report bullying to a trusted adult.
- Blaze Basketball Club request all parent supervisors and coaches remain vigilant at all times and report incidences when needed following procedures below.

5. Procedures for Investigation, Follow-up, Recording and Resolution

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

Coaches are best advised to take a calm, neutral, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by players, coaches or parents/guardians.

The club’s procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and established strategies used by the club for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- All reports of bullying, including anonymous reports, no matter how trivial they are perceived are noted, investigated and dealt with by the relevant coach. The incident will be explored by asking what happened, who was involved, when the incident happened, where it happened and if possible to identify why it may have happened. (Please see Appendix A for a recording template).
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant adult will exercise his/her judgment to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and players are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist in resolving any issues.
- Effort will be made to resolve any issues and to restore positive relations as far as practicable. The coach/adult will speak separately to the players/adults involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story.
- If a group is involved, each member will be questioned individually and the group may meet as a whole. At the group meeting each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other’s statements. Each member of the group should be supported by the intervention of the coach, through any possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group.

- Adults are advised to record their discussions with each individual player and their discussions with a group.
- Every effort should be made to try to get the alleged bully to see the situation from the victim's point of view, and the extent of the hurt that has been caused.
- Parents/guardians will be informed of outcomes and no presumptions of guilt are made until all the facts become known.
- Serious cases of bullying behaviour by players will be reported to the Children's Officer and the club Designated Liaison Person (DLP).
- It must be made clear to all involved that in any situation where sanctions are required, this is a private matter between those directly involved.

6. Follow up and Recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant adult must, as part of his / her judgment, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
 - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as practicable
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as in practicable
 - Any feedback from the parties involved.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) or other adult is not satisfied that the club has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures the parent(s)/guardian(s) / adult involved must be referred as appropriate to the clubs Complaints, Disciplinary, Dispute Resolution and Appeals policy on the clubs website.

This policy was adopted by the club committee on 24/1/24.

This policy has been made available to club personnel. A copy of this policy will be made available on the Club Website. See [Downloads – Letterkenny Blaze Basketball Club](#).

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Club at the start of every new season.

Signed: 

(Chairperson)

Date: 05/02/2024

Signed: 

(Children's Officer)

Date: 5/02/24

Date of next review: September 2024

Appendix A – Recording Template

- **What happened:**
- **Date of incidence/s:**
- **Who was involved:**
- **When the incident/s happened:**
- **Where it happened:**
- **Why it may have happened:**

Actions taken by Coach:

Outcome:

Signed:

Date: