**Power Athletics Anti-Bullying Policy**

Power Athletics Cheerleading   
Date of Next Review: July 2021   
Reviewed by: Sian Young on 29/06/2020

Power Athletics will encourage, develop and work at building a respectful, happy and supportive environment where everyone feels valued and where bullying, in any form, is not tolerated. It should also be read alongside our other policies and procedures, all of which are available on our website.

The purpose of this policy is:

* To prevent bullying from happening in our organisation, as much as possible.
* When bullying does happen, to make sure it is stopped as soon as possible and those involved receive the support they need.
* To provide information to coaches, volunteers, athletes and parents about what we should all do to prevent bullying and the procedures to follow if it should occur.

We recognise that:

There is no legal definition of bullying. However, it’s usually defined as behaviour that is:

* Repeated
* Intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
* Often aimed at certain groups, eg. because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation (https://www.gov.uk/bullying-atschool/bullying-a-definition - last updated July 2015)
* One person or a group can bully others
* Bullying can occur either face to face between individuals and groups or online, using information technology, such as computers or mobile phones
* We all have a role to play in preventing bullying and putting a stop to bullying.

We will seek to prevent bullying by:

* Developing a code of conduct that sets out what is expected from our various club members, both in face-to-face and online behaviour.
* Developing a complaints policy and procedure.
* Make sure all coaches, volunteers, athletes and parents have clear information about our anti-bullying policy, complaints procedure, code of behaviour and anti-bullying procedure.
* Developing a friendly and team orientated atmosphere, where every athlete, team or volunteer is equal and their individual skill sets are embraced.

Bullying can include:

* Verbal teasing or making fun of someone
* Excluding people from games and conversations
* Pressuring others not to be friends with the person being bullied
* Spreading hurtful rumours or passing around inappropriate photographs / images / drawings
* Shouting at or verbally abusing someone
* Stealing and damaging someone’s belongings
* Making threats
* Forcing someone to do something embarrassing, harmful or dangerous
* Harassment on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, disability or religion
* Physical or sexual assault (although all sexual incidents, and all but very minor physical incidents, constitute abuse and must be dealt with in accordance to our safeguarding policy and procedure).
* Bullying causes real distress. It can affect a person’s health and development and, at the extreme, can cause significant harm.

Signs and symptoms of bullying

If someone is being bullied, they might not tell anyone directly. This could be because they have been threatened and are afraid to say anything or because they believe that nothing can be done about it and that telling someone will only make it worse. It could be because they don’t recognise that what is happening to them is bullying.

Signs that someone may be being bullied could include:

* Being unhappy, withdrawn and unwilling to spend time in a group
* Being without friends
* Missing meetings and activities at Power Athletics and/or expressing a reluctance to attend
* Being clingy with adults
* Appearing to lose possessions or money (things that may have been stolen or given away to bullies)
* Unexplained injuries
* Uncharacteristic illness or aggression

Some of these signs may indicate abuse at the hands of adults or other negative experiences, so they should be treated with caution. If a bullying report encroaches on a safeguarding concern then those policies supercede this one and should be followed instead.

**What to do if you are being bullied:**

If you are being bullied, you should never keep it to yourself. Tell someone you trust. This could be a coach, another athlete or your parent - whatever you feel most comfortable with! You can also bring your trusted person to help you report the incident to a coach, if it wasn’t reported to them directly.

If bullying happens at Power Athletics, we will sort it out here. If it is happening somewhere else, such as school, we will work with the bullied person and their family to get other people involved to stop it happening there.

**What to do if you see someone being bullied or if someone tells you they are being bullied:**

If you are a child or young person: don’t try to deal with it yourself and talk to the person being bullied about getting help from an adult. Try to persuade them to speak to the session coach or designated person, you can offer to go with them if it helps. If they won’t do this, the best way to help is to explain that you will have to tell an adult yourself - and then go ahead and tell someone.

If you are an adult: make sure you take the child seriously, listen to their full account of what’s going on and don’t ask leading questions. If possible help the child to fill out a bullying report form, found at the end of this document, and hand it in to the designated person. If it is not possible try to direct the child to the session coach or designated person, or approach them yourself to report the incident.

If you observe bullying: act assertively to put a stop to it and explain to all involved that the incident will have to be reported. Report the incident to the session coach or designated person, who will fill in a report form with you.

**Bullying procedure**

Once we get a report that bullying has taken place and a full investigation will take place, considering the points of view of the person being bullied, the bully and any witnesses expressed during meetings with their parents (if under 18). Incidents involving bullying will then follow the same traffic light system as per our code of conducts:

First time incident (minor):

If you behave inappropriately, staff or volunteers will remind you of the code of conduct and ask you to comply with it. They will give you an opportunity to change your behaviour. This gives you the chance to reflect and plan a positive response with support from staff or volunteers.

The traffic light system:

1. If your behaviour does not improve following the first reminder, or if your behaviour is more serious, you will be given a formal GREEN LIGHT warning by one of the competition coaches. The incident will be recorded and your parents will be informed. Your coach will also discuss what happened with you and agree upon any support needed to improve your behaviour in the future.

2. If you continue to behave inappropriately after a green light warning, you will be issued a formal AMBER LIGHT warning by one of the competition coaches. The incident will be recorded and parents contacted. At this stage, we may decide to issue appropriate sanctions, such as training bans. Your coach will also discuss what happened with you and agree upon any support needed to improve your behaviour in the future.

3. If this has still not helped to improve your behaviour, then a formal RED LIGHT warning will be issued. Again, the incident will be recorded and your parents will be informed. At this point a formal meeting may need to take place with you and your parents to discuss other services that might better suit your needs. Severe or acutely occurring incidents of bad behaviour may result in your removal from Power Athletics teams and services.

Details of any meetings held will be shared with other coaches in a separate meeting to determine if there is any follow up action required in any of these areas:

* An apology that has/should have been offered
* Details of extra support for bullied person (eg buddy system)
* Details of consequences or extra support for the bully (following code of conduct traffic light system)
* Details of any further action needed within the group (eg observers or encouragers to bullying)
* Address any changes that need to be made to our handling of bullying in the future

Plans created for dealing with the aftermath of the incident should be copied to all parents and the bullied child and should be placed in the file of all involved.