

The Scottish Karate Governing Body Limited

Preventing and Responding to Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is particularly hurtful behaviour where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can be a 'one-off' occurrence or repeated over a period of time and can take many forms including children being bullied by adults, their peers and in some cases by members of their families. Bullying can be difficult to identify because it often happens away from others and those who are bullied often do not tell anyone. Bullying is not always deliberate.

Examples of bullying

- Physical, e.g. theft, hitting, kicking (this might constitute an assault).
- Verbal (including teasing), e.g. spreading rumours, threats or name-calling, ridicule or humiliation.
- Emotional, e.g. isolating a child from the activities or social acceptance of the peer group.
- Cyberbullying, e.g. sending insulting messages via text or emails, posting images or upsetting information on social networking sites or forums.
- Using abusive or insulting behaviour in a manner which causes alarm or distress.
- Prejudiced based – singling out children who may be perceived as different due to things such as race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, asylum seeking, being looked after or being young carers.
- Having belongings stolen or damaged.
- Being targeted because of who the child is or who they are perceived to be.

Signs which **may** raise concerns about bullying include:

- Hesitation or reluctance to attend training or activity.
- Reluctance to go to certain places or work with a certain individual.
- Bruising or other injuries.
- Becoming nervous and withdrawn.
- Often last one picked for a team or group activity for no apparent reason, or being picked on when they think your back is turned.
- Clothing or personal possessions going missing or get damaged.
- 'Losing' pocket money repeatedly.
- Suddenly prone to lashing out at people, either physically or verbally, when normally quiet.

When talking about bullying, it's never helpful to label children and young people as 'bullies' or 'victims'. Labels can stick for life and can isolate a child, rather than helping them to recover or change their behaviour. It is preferable to talk about someone displaying bullying behaviour rather than label them a 'bully' – behaviour can be changed with help and support.

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Note: Guidance adapted from www.respectme.org.uk

Action to help children and young people on the receiving end of bullying behaviour:

- Cultivate an ethos where there's an anti-bullying culture – it is especially important that adults are good role models for children and young people.
- Take all signs of bullying very seriously.
- Encourage all children to speak and share their concerns. Help those being bullied to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority. Create an open environment.
- Take all allegations seriously and take action to ensure the young person is safe. Speak with those being bullied and those displaying bullying behaviour separately.
- Reassure the young person that you can be trusted and will help them, although you can't promise to tell no one else.
- Keep records of what is said, i.e. what happened, by whom and when.
- In cases of cyberbullying advise young people who are being bullied by text, email etc. to retain the communication or to print it out.
- Report any concerns to the person in charge at the organisation where the bullying is occurring.

Support for children and young people involved in bullying behaviour:

- Talk with the young person (or people), explain the situation and try to get them to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- It might be worth considering seeking an apology from those involved in bullying behaviour (for example where those on the receiving end wish reconciliation). Apologies are only of real value however, when they are genuine.
- Be sensitive and use good judgement when it comes to informing parents/carers of those whose negative behaviour is impacting on others. Put the child at the centre – will telling the parents/carers result in more problems for the young person?
- If appropriate, insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and compensation for the person/people being bullied.
- Impose consequences as necessary, e.g. exclusion from the team until behaviour standards are improved. Sport offers good opportunities for this.
- Encourage and support those displaying bullying behaviour to change this behaviour. Ask them to consider the impact their actions are having.
- Keep a written record of action taken.

What can your organisation do?

Creating an anti-bullying ethos is the best prevention. We should not underestimate the importance of the behaviour of adults as they are role models for children and young people.

Strategies and solutions do not come in 'one size fits all'. Each case is unique and requires an individual response to the individual situation. What might work in one situation might not work in another. You might have to adopt different strategies before finding one that is effective.

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It is important to ask for help and support if you need it to deal with a bullying incident. The *Useful Contacts* list has more details but [respectme](#), [ChildLine](#) and [Children 1st Parentline](#) are useful contacts.

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