



Fingal Ravens GFC – Anti-Bullying Policy

The Club will not tolerate bullying in any form. The Club's Anti-Bullying Policy may be summarized as follows in line with the Irish Sports Councils Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport and the GAA Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport and is subject to change and/or updating as per club rules.

We will endeavour to:

- Raise the awareness within our club that bullying of any kind is unacceptable.
- Encourage children, coaches/mentors and parents/guardians to report bullying to the Club Children's Officer or a Club Official.
- The Club wishes to obtain the co-operation of parents/guardians to counter bullying.

The definition of bullying is when an individual or a group of people with more power, repeatedly and intentionally cause hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond. Bullying can continue over time, is often hidden from adults, and will probably continue if no action is taken.

While the bullying definition is broad and can occur in a variety of environments it usually is a relationship problem and requires relationship-based solutions. These are best solved in the social environment in which they occur: in a child or young person's life, this is most often the school.

Bullying is not:

- Single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- Single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- Random acts of aggression or intimidation
- Mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

These actions can cause great distress. However, they do not fit the definition of bullying, and they're not examples of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them.

It is the responsibility of the club as a whole to deal with bullying that may take place. Incidents of bullying will be dealt with immediately and not tolerated under any circumstance.



Complaints Procedures and Club Discipline

Misconduct by players will result in a warning issued by a coach, mentor or club official. If this misconduct is repeated, minor sanctions, such as a time out from a training session will be invoked. If the misconduct continues the child's parents will be informed or the coach/mentor may request a parent/guardian to collect their child from training or play. This action is appropriate where a player has continued to offend, does not respond to the instructions of the coach, has wilfully damaged club property or property of visiting clubs or teams or where the player has brought the team or club into disrepute during training sessions, match or other organised events. Examples of such serious behaviour are; striking another player/officer of club, using repeated bad language, bullying or refusal to abide by the Clubs Code of Behaviour. Also, inappropriate use of a mobile phone (i.e. taking inappropriate pictures in a dressing room or anywhere else) will be considered a serious offence by the Club.

Where a serious problem has occurred, the coach may refer the incident to the Club Children's Officer who will review all matters and may decide to meet the parents/guardians with the coach, to try to resolve the difficulties by way of offering Mediation and/or Intervention with all person(s) involved.

Stage 1 – Mediation / Intervention:

The Club will endeavour to deal with all complaints as soon as possible. A complaint may be made to the Clubs Children's Officer, Designated Person or a member of the Committee. All complaints will be noted and kept on file.

The club's first course of action will be to encourage the complainant to speak directly to the person they have an issue with in a calm and non-aggressive manner. If the issue cannot be resolved, then a member of the committee or the Children's Officer (if deemed appropriate) may mediate to try to resolve the issue by way of using the following successful intervention.

“Bullying is an interaction which establishes group identity, dominance and status at the expense of the victim; therefore, it is only through the development of values such as empathy, consideration and unselfishness that the bully is likely to relinquish the behaviour and function differently in a social setting. By involving peers, it is possible to enhance the empathic responses from all involved.

The "No Blame" approach is described in a **7-step process** entailing:

- 1) Talking with the victim (and parents) about his or her feelings and letting them know that talking about it is the right thing to do. They should feel supported.
- 2) Contacting parents of person/group to suggest convening a meeting with people involved, including bystanders and others in collusion with the behaviour.



- 3) Explaining the problem to the group, focusing on the victim's feeling and not allocating blame but creating awareness.
- 4) Sharing responsibility so that the person/group know they are responsible and need to take action to rectify the situation.
- 5) Asking the person/group for suggestions to help the victim feel better.
- 6) Giving responsibility for solving the problem to the group.
- 7) Meeting with the group again and the victim (separately & together) to monitor the situation and keep the members involved.

If there are numerous complaints about a club member/coach/parent/player etc. the club may bring the matter to the Disciplinary Committee at any time to resolve it.

Stage 2 (Official route):

If the situation cannot be resolved at the first stage, then the complaint must be put in writing and given to the Club Committee. The complaint will be forwarded to the Disciplinary Committee for discussion and review.

Disciplinary Committee

The Disciplinary Committee will be made up of the Clubs Committee, Children's Officer, Designated Person and the Clubs Head Coach. If the complaint is about any of the above-mentioned people, then that person cannot be part of the Disciplinary Committee.

The complaint shall be responded to in writing within 2 weeks. If the complaint involves suspected abuse, then the Procedure for Reporting Allegation of Child Abuse shall be implemented.

The Disciplinary Committee shall inform the person whom the complaint is being made against in writing. They may provide a response either verbally (at a meeting with disciplinary committee) or in writing. They must be accompanied by a parent.

All processes will be clearly and accurately recorded at every stage. All information from the process written or verbal will be kept confidential.

When dealing with a complaint it is important to be clear about:

- The incident of concern.
- Any previous incidents considered.
- Any remedial action to be taken, e.g. an apology.
- Any new behaviour expected.
- What will happen if the arrangements agreed are not adhered to.

Following its deliberations, the Disciplinary Committee may issue any of the following sanctions as it deems necessary:



- Issue a formal warning.
- Suspension from training and/or matches.
- Suspension from club.
- Expulsion from club.
- Or any other suggested consequences deemed appropriate by the Disciplinary Committee.

Appeals Procedure

A finding of the Disciplinary Committee may be appealed to the clubs Appeal Committee.