

3 key lessons to help prevent bullying in sport

Whether participating in a sport, coaching or volunteering everyone should be aware of what bullying is and how it can be prevented.

[Taken from our Preventing Bullying in Sport](#) training course, written in Partnership with UK Athletics, this resource looks at three ways people working or volunteering in sport can help protect the welfare of all athletes and participants.

Introduction

Bullying is the behaviour of an individual or group repeated over time that intentionally hurts another person or group of people.

Bullies generally focus on a perceived weakness, making the person being bullied feel inferior.

Bullying in sport may occur due to feelings of jealousy brought about by a team or individual performing well in a training session, competition or match. Whatever the reason, and whatever your role in sport, be it coach, volunteer, parent, or participant, there are three key lessons that can help prevent bullying in sport.

1. Promote positive behaviour
2. Be vigilant
3. Develop an anti-bullying policy

1. Promoting positive behaviour

If you are involved as a coach, teacher or volunteer start by asking yourself the following questions.

- Do you or others around you yell at players or athletes if they make a mistake?
- Do other members of the team make fun of their teammates?
- Do you ignore derogatory comments made by other teammates?

- Do you ignore acts of violence, of whatever level, by other teammates? This could be throwing a piece of kit at an individual.
- Do you act in a favourable manner to the stronger, more able players?

If you have answered yes to any of these then you are not promoting positive behaviours in your sport. As a club, coach, teacher or volunteer you should:

- Look critically at how your own behaviour could be perceived.
- Respect those around you.
- Accept feedback without being defensive; be open to change.
- Encourage all participants regardless.
- Promote fair play.
- Ensure all participants are made aware of the behaviour, ethos and standards required (codes of conduct).
- Promote healthy relationships by encouraging empathy, kindness, honesty and respect. Healthy relationships give people the tools to resolve conflict, regulate their emotions and manage stress. This can increase resilience, making people less likely to be involved with bullying.
- Recognise the importance of being a role model and set a good example to ensure a safe and respectful sporting environment. Never tolerate bullying.
- It is important that parents are aware of the anti-bullying policy.
- Do not tolerate abusive behaviour in any form.

2. Be vigilant

Whether you participate, coach or volunteer, it is important to be vigilant. Become aware of any hotspots where bullying could take place.

Examples are:

- changing rooms
- touchlines

- sporting events such as swim heats, semi-final matches, qualifying heats.

Ask the opinion of those taking part or observing.

Examples of questions you could ask are:

- What did you enjoy about the training session today?
- Was there anything you did not enjoy?
- Is there anything about participating you don't like?
- Do you feel part of the team/group?
- Who are the people you trust most at the club?

3. Develop an anti-bullying policy

If you are part of an affiliated organisation they will have an anti-bullying policy.

If you are not part of an affiliated organisation, you should put in place a clearly written anti-bullying policy. The policy should make it clear that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any allegations of bullying will be taken very seriously. The policy should be made easily available.

The anti-bullying policy should include:

- a definition of bullying and the forms it takes
- a statement about the club's commitment to duty of care
- a statement that bullying is not acceptable
- what preventive measures the club will put in place to stop bullying
- how bullying incidents will be dealt with by the club
- signposting of additional support.

Preventing Bullying in Sport online training course

This information was taken from our online training course developed in partnership with UK Athletics.

This course is aimed at all staff, coaches and volunteers working in the sports sector and will help you understand:

- what bullying is
- prevalence of bullying in sport
- why it is important to respond to bullying
- the signs and indicators of bullying
- bullying behaviour
- the effects of bullying
- how to respond to bullying
- responding to a bullying disclosure
- promoting positive behaviour.

This course costs £9.50 excl. VAT and you can [buy online today](#) or, if you require further courses to protect players and participants, you may be interested in our complete safeguarding and duty of care e-learning service, EduCare for Sport[®] which combines a wide range of courses into one cost-effective bundle.

Get in touch to find out more – online@educare.co.uk