



Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

NEWPORT COUNTY AFC

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1. Introduction

Newport County AFC is committed to providing a safe, friendly, and caring environment for all our players, staff, volunteers, and spectators, so that they can work and enjoy football in a secure and relaxed environment.

Bullying and harassment is not acceptable and will be dealt with in a swift and effective manner. Newport County AFC acknowledges its responsibility for the working environment and for the welfare and protection of its players, staff, and volunteers, and spectators while believing that individuals are responsible for their own behaviour, both professionally and personally. There is an expectation that individuals will conduct themselves in a manner which does not cause offence to another person.

In essence, everyone has a responsibility for upholding personal dignity and to challenge unacceptable behaviour.

Players, staff, volunteers, and spectators of Newport County AFC can expect to be valued and respected as an individual. We expect everyone associated with Newport County AFC to treat each other with kindness, empathy, and respect.

This policy covers all employees, volunteers, players and spectators at Newport County AFC, and all persons performing work at the direction of, relating to, or on behalf of Newport County AFC (for example contractors, subcontractors, agents, consultants, and temporary staff).

This Policy extends to all functions, events and places that are work related, for example: work lunches, conferences, Christmas parties and client functions.

2. The Definition of Bullying

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of a person or group, by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face-to-face or online.

We adopt the acronym **STOP** which stands for **Several Times On Purpose** and ask that people also remember **STOP** to **Start Telling Other People** and report the behaviour that they or someone else is being subjected to.

3. Types of Bullying

Bullying is an abusive behaviour of which there are five types. Verbal, physical, emotional, cyber and sexual.

3.1 Verbal bullying can start off harmless and is often referred to as 'banter'. However, it can escalate to levels which start to affect the individual. It can include but is not limited to:

- Name calling, insults, teasing
- Intimidation and threats
- Homophobic, racist, sexist, or disablist remarks
- Verbal abuse.

Bullying towards those with a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 can be considered a Hate Crime, which is a criminal offence.

3.2 Physical bullying causes both short-term and long-term damage. It can include but is not limited to:

- Pushing, shoving, kicking, and hitting
- Pinching and other forms of violence
- Spitting at someone
- Sexual violence including up-skirting
- Taking or damaging possessions
- Making people do things that they don't want to do.

3.3 Emotional bullying can be referred to as covert bullying. It is often more difficult to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It can include but is not limited to:

- Lying and spreading rumours
- Negative gestures, looks or mimicking
- Playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- Excluding and encouraging others to socially exclude someone, both face-to-face and online
- Damaging someone's reputation and social acceptance.

3.4 Cyber-bullying can be overt or covert bullying behaviours using digital technologies such as laptops and mobile phones, through social media sites, instant messaging, texts and websites. It can be in public or private and can only be known to the target and the person bullying. It can include but is not limited to:

- Abusive or hurtful texts, emails, posts, images, and videos
- Deliberately excluding others online
- Nasty gossip or rumours
- Imitating others online or using their log-in.

3.5 Bullying and sexual and sexist behaviours also overlap, and it is possible that behaviours can be sexual bullying, sexist bullying and sexual harassment. This can happen either face to face, or via digital technologies such as laptops, mobile phones, through social media sites, instant messaging, texts and websites. It can include, but is not limited to:

- Rumours about their sexual activity
- Unwanted or inappropriate comments of a sexual nature
- Being sent pictures or videos they did not want to see
- Being put under pressure to provide sexual images of themselves
- Having pictures or videos that they sent being shared more widely without their knowledge or consent
- Feeling pressured to do sexual things that they did not want to do.

4. Reasons For Bullying

At Newport County AFC we would like to adopt the language used by our charity partners at Kidscape, of target as opposed to victim and perpetrator as opposed to bully. The terminology of victim gives the perception of someone being weak or pathetic when they are being bullied and targeted usually through no fault of their own. Bully can be received as being nasty or viscous,

when often there is something going on in their own life, and the bullying behaviour is a communication that something is not quite right in their lives at that moment in time.

Therefore, it is vital that whilst we support the person that has been targeted, and important that we take the appropriate steps to resolve the situation, it is equally as important that we work with the perpetrator to understand the reason for their behaviour and support them with that, be that through education or otherwise, along with taking the appropriate action as documented within our Club policies and procedures.

5. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Bullying can have a long-term impact for an individual and can greatly affect their mental health and wellbeing. Key signs and symptoms can include but are not limited to:

- Depression and anxiety
- Increased feelings of sadness, helplessness, decreased self-esteem and loneliness
- Withdrawal and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy
- Unexplained injuries
- Weight loss/gain
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits/disordered eating e.g. skipping meals/binge eating
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Self-destructive behaviours such as running away from home, self-harm or talking about/attempted suicide
- Needing money on a regular basis (to give to the perpetrator)
- Increased usage of media devices.

6. Procedures

Newport County AFC believes any person who feels that they are not being treated with respect and dignity and who feel they have been bullied, harassed, or victimised have the right to report the bullying as a grievance and to have that dealt with seriously and promptly.

Newport County AFC is committed to resolving issues raised under the Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy through alternative processes dependent upon the severity of the incident.

These can include:

- ***Conflict resolution***, where an individual will listen to both the perpetrator and the target. This can be an in the moment incident, that has come out of the blue, with both parties feeling aggrieved. Both will need to understand, show empathy and be able to apologise for the incident.
- ***Informal conversation and a behaviour plan***. This could be in the instance where a young person has used unkind words or unkind hands towards another child. Both the target and the perpetrator will be listened to carefully to understand the situation and support

will be provided for the target and the perpetrator, usually through an education route for the perpetrator and a wellbeing support plan for the target. The perpetrator will then be placed on to a six-week action plan, where behaviours will be closely monitored, and escalated where appropriate, which could in more severe instances lead to expulsion from the Club.

- More severe and prolonged instances of bullying including hate crime can lead to disciplinary action, stadium bans, police involvement, and referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), FA, EFL, FAW and DBS service.
- As a regulated activity provider, we as a Club also have a duty to report anyone to the DBS service who has satisfied the harm test. This is when someone has been removed from regulated activity through the Club's or the individual's own request, and is likely to have caused harm to, or placed a child or vulnerable adult at risk of harm. This will be referred to the DBS service and can be then noted on any future DBS applications.

Newport County AFC expects everyone associated with the Club to report all incidents of inappropriate behaviour, with all staff and volunteers expected to report any instances of bullying or harassment, no matter how big or small to the relevant Safeguarding Officer, either by reporting directly on My Concern, via email or by telephone. All incident reports will be treated seriously, promptly and in complete confidence.

Reports of bullying and harassment from spectators and members of the public regarding the behaviour of a person associated with the Club, will be dealt with under the Club's Complaints Policy.

7.Recommended Club Action

- Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
- If this fails or is not appropriate, a two-person panel consisting of the relevant Safeguarding Officer and an impartial member of staff should meet with the alleging target(s) to obtain details of the allegation. A parent/carer must be present if they are under the age of 18. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
- The same panel should meet with the alleged perpetrator(s) and, if age appropriate, parents/carers and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed by all as a true account.
- If bullying has, in the view of such Club officials, taken place, the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action. This may include temporary or permanent suspension should the bullying continue following the notice of further action. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
- In some cases, involving those under the age of 18, the parent/carers of the perpetrator or target can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated and keep in regular contact with the target and perpetrator for relevant support for both parties.
- For bullying involving those under the age of 18, all coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process.

- All coaches/line managers involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.
- The Club reserves the right to implement procedures to ensure the potential target of bullying is kept safe. This may mean a player, member of staff, volunteer or spectator may be removed whilst an investigation takes place.
- In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the Club the appropriate authorities should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate. These authorities could include, and are not limited to LADO, EFL, FA, Police, Social Services.
- It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, the Senior Safeguarding Manager will invoke the Affiliated Football Bodies process and refer to the FA, EFL, FAW and statutory partners.
- More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Social Services if targeted at someone under the age of 18. This information can also be shared with the DBS service, should you meet the harm test and be removed from regulated activity either through choice or by dismissal.

8. Prevention

The club will have extensive policies and procedures in place to avoid such instances of bullying and harassment, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members of the Club.

The Senior Safeguarding Manager will raise awareness around anti-bullying and why it matters, and if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

All employees and officials of Newport County AFC agree on their commitment to ensuring a safe environment for all, through the undertaking of relevant assessment and qualifications.

9. Monitoring, review, and evaluation

The Senior Safeguarding Manager will continue to work with key staff throughout the organisation to continue to monitor previous complaints of bullying as the season progresses and we will always look to review our practices as a minimum of an annual basis.

Young peoples' voice is important to us, and we will continue to include them through regular feedback which will help us to shape our provision and policies.

10. Additional Information

On occasions, we may need to share personal information with external agencies, such as the police, social services, EFL, FA, FAW and DBS to assist with further enquiries, especially in serious incidents of bullying.

Should we feel that it is not necessary to contact the police, that does not affect individuals' rights to contact the police. We are duty bound to provide a safe environment for all players, staff, volunteers, and spectators.

Should there be an external situation which would threaten an individual's safety and wellbeing within Newport County AFC, they are encouraged to discuss this with us, so that we can take appropriate measures to support where able and necessary.

We respect people's right to confidentiality when they report an allegation of bullying. Whilst investigating instances of bullying, we are also responsible for providing confidentiality to the perpetrator until the investigation is complete. Should the investigation proceed to a criminal investigation, we will not be able to disclose any details of the investigation until the criminal proceedings are complete.

Important Contacts

Senior Safeguarding Manager

Email: safeguarding@newport-county.co.uk

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Academy Manager

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Head of Academy Operations / Academy DSO

Jordan Hughes

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11/20/2025

NSPCC

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Tel: 0808 800 5000

Childline

Tel: 0800 1111

Kidscape

Email: parentsupport@kidscape.org.uk

Tel: 07496 682785