



# Liphook United Football Club

Affiliated to the Hampshire Football Association

[www.liphook-united.org](http://www.liphook-united.org)

## Anti-bullying Policy

Liphook United Football Club defines bullying as the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be:

- *emotional* - being unfriendly, excluding (emotionally and physically), sending hurtful text messages, tormenting (eg hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)
- *physical* - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- *racist* - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- *sexual* - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- *homophobic* - because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality
- *verbal* - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

Liphook United Football Club is committed to eradicating bullying because:

- bullying hurts
- no one deserves to be a victim of bullying
- everybody has the right to be treated with respect
- individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Liphook United Football Club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

- All club members, coaches, officials and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All club members, officials and coaching staff should know what the club policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All players and parents/carers should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a club we take bullying seriously. Players and parents/carers should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- All club members, coaches, officials and parents/carers should have an appreciation of the signs and indicators of bullying.

Liphook United Football Club is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members so they can participate in football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all club members or parents should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Liphook United Football Club is a *TELLING* club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the club's Child Welfare Officer or any committee member.

Liphook United Football Club acknowledges that a child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- says he or she is being bullied
- is unwilling to go to club sessions
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- feels ill before training sessions
- comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged
- has possessions go 'missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

Liphook United Football Club also acknowledges that in more extreme cases, a child may:

- start stammering
- cry themselves to sleep at night or have nightmares
- become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- bully other children or siblings
- stop eating
- attempt or threaten suicide, or run away.

Liphook United Football Club acknowledges that these signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Liphook United Football Club uses the following procedures to deal with incidents of bullying:

- Report bullying incidents to the club's Child Welfare Officer or to a member of the club's committee, or contact the Hampshire FA's Child Protection Officer.
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the Hampshire FA's Child Protection Officer for advice and possibly to the FA's Case Management System.
- Parents/carers should be informed and will be asked to come in for a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, Police will be consulted.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
- If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue, Liphook United Football Club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution. This means the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation and they should follow the procedure outlined below:
  - Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
  - If this fails, or is not appropriate, a small panel (made up from Chairman, Child Welfare Officer, Secretary and committee members) should meet with the parents/carers and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
  - The same persons should meet with the alleged bully and 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.
  - If bullying has in their view taken place, the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action, ie temporary or permanent suspension, if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.
  - In some cases the parent/carers of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.
  - All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process, ie the warning.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone:

- The Hampshire FA's Child Protection Officer should always be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate.
- It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, attendance of an FA Learning **Safeguarding Children** course may be recommended.
- More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Social Services.

Liphook United Football Club is committed to prevention of bullying. This means:

- the club has a written constitution, which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members, of which the anti-bullying policy is one part
- all club members and parents will sign to accept the constitution upon joining the club
- the Child Welfare Officer will raise awareness about 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.