



Leighton United Football Club

ANTI - BULLYING POLICY

This club policy is based on the Football Association's Anti-Bullying Policy template for football clubs.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all associated with the club so they can participate in football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Leighton United Football Club.

If bullying does occur, all associated with the club, including parents/carers, should be able to tell the club about this and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively by the club.

We are a TELLING Club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) or any Management Committee member. Leighton United Football Club is committed to playing its part to teach players to treat each other with respect.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace, and comes in many different forms:

Verbal: Name calling, persistent teasing, mocking, taunting and threats.

Physical: Any form of physical violence, intimidating behaviour, theft, or the intentional damaging of possessions. This includes hitting, kicking and pushing.

Emotional: Excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliation, setting people up and spreading rumours.

Cyberbullying: The misuse of digital technologies or communications to bully a person or a group, typically through messages or actions that are threatening and/or intended to cause offence, anxiety, or humiliation. Examples of cyberbullying include:

- Abusive comments, rumours, gossip, and threats made using digital communications and/or technologies – this includes internet trolling.

- Sharing pictures, videos, or personal information without the consent of the owner and with intent to cause harm or humiliation.
- Hacking into someone's email, phone, or online profiles to extract and share personal information, or to send hurtful content while posing as that person.
- Creating dedicated websites that intend to harm, make fun of someone, or spread malicious rumours.
- Pressurising someone to do something they do not want to such as sending a sexually explicit image.

Leighton United Football Club commits to ensure our website and social media platforms are being used appropriately and any online bullying will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with procedures detailed in this policy.

People can be targeted for any reason, but people who bully others often target 'difference' and bullying can be a form of wider discrimination. For example, bullying behaviour may be:

- **Racist:** Targeted at ethnicity, skin colour, and language, religious or cultural practices.
- **Homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic:** Targeted at actual or perceived sexuality and/or gender.
- **Sexual and/or sexist:** Sexual and/or sexist behaviour that is intended to cause offence, humiliation or intimidation.
- **Disablist:** Targeted at an impairment or special educational need.
- **Targeting any 'difference':** Bullying behaviour can also be targeted at 'looks', weight and height, colour of hair, wearing glasses or braces, acne, psoriasis and eczema, scars, marks or conditions of the face or body, body odour, poverty, gifts and talents or family situation (e.g. divorce, bereavement, homelessness).

Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and no one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Leighton United Football Club recognizes its responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

PROCEDURES

1. Report bullying incidents to a CWO or a member of the club's Management Committee.
2. Reports to Management Committee members must be forwarded to a CWO.

3. In cases of what are assessed by CWOs as serious bullying, the incidents will be referred by CWOs to the County Football Association Designated Safeguarding Officer for advice and possibly to The FA Case Management Team.
3. Parents/carers should be informed by CWOs and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
7. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action in accordance with the club's disciplinary procedure.

RECOMMENDED CLUB ACTION

If the club decides it is appropriate to will deal with the situation, the procedure outlined below will be followed:

1. Reconciliation by getting the parties together. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If this fails/is not appropriate, a small panel, composed from the Chairperson, Head Coach, CWOs, Club Secretary or other Management Committee members, should meet with the parent/carer and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation. A formal record should be taken for clarity which should be agreed by all as a true account.
3. The same club persons should meet with the alleged bully or bullies and parents/carers and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. A formal record should again be taken and agreed by all as a true account.
4. If bullying has in the club person's view taken place, the individual or group responsible should be warned and put on notice of further action i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between the parties is appropriate at this time.
5. In some cases, the parent/carer/ of the bully (or bullies) or bullied player may be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The Management Committee (or representative(s) should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.

6. All coaches/team managers involved with both the bullies and the bullied should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e. the warning.

In the cases of adults reported to be bullying anyone within the club under 18:

1. The County Football Association Designated Safeguarding Officer must be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate. This may include action by The FA Safeguarding Team.
2. It is anticipated that in most cases where the allegation is made regarding a coach, team manager or club official, The FA's Safeguarding Children Education Programme may be recommended.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the police and/or Children's Social Care.
4. Actions will be coordinated by CWOs, ensuring appropriate confidentiality.

PREVENTION

- The club has formal rules, policies and procedures, which include what is acceptable and proper behaviour for players, coaches, team managers, officials, parents/carers/appointed guardians, and other supporters, of which the Anti-Bullying Policy is one part.
- Parents/carers agree to comply with the club rules, policies and the spectator and parent/carer code of conduct when completing annual player registration forms. Coaches/team managers and club officials agree to comply with the relevant codes of conduct. These codes of conduct are based on the FA Respect codes.
- The CWOs 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 ('members' are defined in the club rules as the current Management Committee, current lead Team Managers/Coaches registered with the Football Association (FA) and listed on the FA Whole Game System (WGS) and current team administrators (where appointed)).

INFORMATION SOURCES

- The FA policy template is based on guidance provided to The FA by KIDSCAPE, a voluntary organization committed to help prevent child bullying.

Guidance can be found in the safeguarding area of the FA website:

<https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding>

An image of the first page of the current edition is shown below:



The Kidscape team can be contacted by email Monday to Friday at info@kidscape.org.uk, or via their website www.kidscape.org.uk.

If you are a parent/carer in need of advice or support, you can contact the Kidscape Parent Advice Line in the first instance. Tel. 07496 682785.

Other websites designed to give advice and guidance to parents/carers and children who are faced with dealing with bullying include:

For parents/carers/appointed guardians:

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

www.stonewall.org.uk

www.bullying.co.uk.

www.familylives.org.uk.

For young people:

www.youngstonewall.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk