



Mounted Games Association of Ireland

Anti-Bullying Policy

Our anti-bullying policy is an integral part of the whole organisation safeguarding policy which states that every child has a right:

- To participate in Horse Sport Ireland/MGA activities without fear of bullying or racist abuse
- To participate and compete in an environment which is calm and purposeful
- To be confident that they can contribute to the sport without fear of embarrassment or criticism
- To expect that the disruptive behaviour of others will not be allowed affect their own participation
- To be treated courteously by all members of Horse Sport Ireland/MGAI.

We know that all sports have bullying. The mark of a good sport is how well they identify and take action in response to issues arising from bullying. Our Anti-Bullying Policy sets out our commitments in respect to the above statement. The policy will outline the following:

- Definition of bullying
- How do we prevent bullying
- Categories of bullying
- Procedures for dealing with bullying
- Support and advice given to young people
- Advice for Parents and Guardians
- Monitoring, Evaluation and review

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Currently there is no legal definition for bullying, The Northern Ireland Anti -Bullying Forum (NIABF) have defined it as: "**Bullying is the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights of another or others.**"

Some examples of bullying are:

Name Calling	Kicking	Inappropriate text messaging or emailing
Taunting	Hitting	Sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet
Mocking	Pushing	Excluding people from groups
Making offensive comments	Taking belongings	Gossiping/Spreading hurtful and untrue rumours

WHAT DO WE DO TO PREVENT BULLYING?

- Ensure that all our members follow the relevant Code of Conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.
- Deal with any incidents as they arise
- Use a whole group policy or "no-blame approach", i.e., not "bullying the bully" but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they were causing, and so making the problem a "shared concern" of the group. (See our Anti-Bullying Activates sheet for more assistance)
- Reinforce that there is a "permission to tell" culture rather than a "might is right"
- Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, in particular new or different children.
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the "no -blame approach" into operation.
- Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can't ignore it, it hurts too much.
- Never encourage a young person to take the matter into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game.
- If a young person reports an incident of bullying to you, tell them there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault.

CATEGORIES OF BULLYING

Prejudice Based.

Bullying: Bullying, no matter how it happens or why it happens, is always wrong. To better understand the behaviour and our response, it can be helpful to think about different themes of bullying. Some forms of prejudice based bullying include:

- *Racial Bullying*: When a child or young person experiences bullying based on the colour of their skin, their ethnic or perceived ethnic origin or cultural or religious background
- *Sectarian Bullying*: When a child or young person experiences bullying based on their real or perceived religious or cultural background
- *Disablist Bullying*: Bullying behaviour that makes a child or young person feel unwelcome or marginalised based on a perceived or actual disability or special need
- *Homophobic Bullying*: When a child or young person experiences bullying because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual, or because others think they are
- *Transphobic Bullying*: Bullying behaviour that makes a child or young person feel unwelcome or marginalised based on their real or perceived gender identify

CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying is bullying that takes place through electronic technologies, such as:

- Mobile or smart phones – e.g. calls, texts, BBM, etc.
- Smart phone apps – e.g. Kik Messenger, Snapchat, WhatsApp, etc.
- Social network websites – e.g. Facebook, Twitter, askFM, Instagram, etc.
- Gaming consoles – e.g. Xbox Live, Playstation, etc.

It can involve some of the following incidents through the above outlets:

- Posting hurtful, embarrassing, or threading material about a young person on social media websites
- Sending nasty text messages or leaving rude voicemails on a young person's mobile phone
- Excluding someone from an online game or sports group
- Setting up fake profiles on a social network to make fun of others

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

All incidents of bullying should initially be investigated by an adult within the association. In all cases the parents of the young person will be contacted. Young people who have been bullied will be helped by the following:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the young person became involved
- Establishing the wrongdoing and need to change

- Informing parent/guarding (s) of both the victim and the bully about the incident

Who Should Deal With Bullying?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the statutory authorities, dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all leaders within the organisation/club. You can liaise with the appropriate senior officer, such as your club children's officer, affiliate children's officer or the Horse Sport Ireland National Children's Officer.

SUPPORT AND ADVICE GIVEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE

- Do not suffer in silence, there is someone in the organisation you can tell
- If a bullying incident does occur, please tell an adult coach/mentor immediately, or even an older athlete
- Tell a member of your family
- Check out online resources for anti-bullying
- Most importantly do not blame yourself for what has happened.

SUPPORT AND ADVICE FOR PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S)

Parents should watch out for signs that their child is being bullied. Early signs may include:

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in training/activities
- Physical signs (Unexplained bruises, scratches or damage to belongings)
- Stressed caused illness- headaches or stomach-aches which are not usual for the child
- Fearful behaviour (Fear of walking to training/events, asking to be accompanied)
- Changes to behaviour (Withdrawn, moody, upset, distressed, not eating, drop in sporting performance)

This list is not exhaustive and there may be other possible reasons for many of the above. The presence of one or more of these is not proof bullying is actually taking place but are signs you should monitor and perhaps speak to your child's coach if you are concerned.

Document Approval

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