



## Torquespeed Football Club Anti-Bullying Policy

### ***Statement of Intent***

Torquespeed Football Club ("The Club") is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe space for all of our members so they can participate in football in a relaxed and secure environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all club members or parents/carers should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **TELLING** club. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Club Welfare Officer or any other committee member. The club is committed to playing its part to teach children and young people to treat each other with respect.

### ***What is Bullying?***

Bullying is 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, including (emotionally and physically) sending hurtful text messages and tormenting (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)
- **Physical** ; pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Sexual** ; unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Discrimination** ; racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, homophobic comments, jokes about disabilities, sexist comments
- **Verbal** ; name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

### ***Cyberbullying***

Cyberbullying is when a person uses technology, i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger) to deliberately upset someone. Bullies often feel anonymous and 'distanced' from the incident when it takes place online and 'bystanders' can easily become bullies themselves by forwarding information. There is a growing trend for bullying to occur online or via text messages – bullies no longer rely on being physically close to their victim.

### ***Trolling***

Trolling is the name given to deliberately posting offensive comments on people's social media pages aimed at causing upset and distress. This type of behaviour could result in legal action.



### ***The Club's Commitment***

The club commits to ensuring that its website and/or social networking pages are being used appropriately and dealing with any form of online bullying swiftly and effectively in line with procedures detailed in this policy.

### ***Why it is important to respond to bullying***

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. The club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### ***Objectives of the Anti-Bullying Policy***

- All club members, coaches, officials and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is
- All club members, officials and coaches should know what the club policy is in respect of bullying and follow these protocols when bullying is reported
- All children/young people and parents/carers should know what the club policy is in respect of bullying and what they should do if bullying arises
- The club takes bullying seriously. Children/young people and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- Bullying will not be tolerated at the club

### ***Signs and Indicators***

A child/young person may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these signs and should investigate if a child/young person:

- 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



In more extreme cases a child/young person 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

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems but bullying should be considered a possibility and must be investigated.

### ***Bullying as a result of any form of discrimination***

Bullying because of discrimination occurs when it is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or ability.

Generally these forms of bullying appear like other sorts of bullying but in particular it can include:

- **Verbal abuse**
  - Derogatory remarks about girls or women, suggesting girls and women are inferior to boys and men, or that black, Asian and ethnic minority people are not as capable as white people
  - Spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that something or someone is inferior and so they are 'gay', i.e. "you're such a gay boy!" or "those trainers are so gay!"
  - Ridiculing someone because of a disability or mental health related issue, or because they have a physical, mental or emotional development delay
  - Referring to someone by the colour of their skin rather than using their name; using nicknames that have racial connotations; isolating someone because they come from another country or social background
- **Physical abuse** – including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault and threatening behaviour
- **Cyberbullying** – using online spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. It can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging



Discrimination is often driven by a lack of understanding which only serves to strengthen stereotypes and can potentially lead to actions that may cause men, women, ethnic minorities, disabled people, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, or people who follow specific religions or beliefs, to feel excluded, isolated or undervalued. The club must ensure that everyone associated with the club know that discriminatory language will not be tolerated.

- If an incident occurs, the offender should be informed that discriminatory language is offensive and will not be tolerated. If an offender continues to make discriminatory remarks, he/she should be warned and advised in detail the effects that discrimination and bullying has on people. If it is a child or young person making the results their parents should be informed of the breach in the Club Code of Conduct and Anti-Bullying Policy.
- If an offender makes persistent remarks, they should be removed from the training sessions or from barred from attending football matches in line with 'managing challenging behaviour'. The Club Welfare Officer or another club official should talk to them in further detail about why their comments are unacceptable.
- If the problem persists, the offender should be made to understand the sanctions that will apply if they continue to use discriminatory language or behaviour.
- For a young offender, parents/carers should be invited to a meeting to discuss the attitudes of the child/young person in line with procedures detailed in this policy.

### ***Procedures***

1. Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer or a member of the club committee or contact the County FA Welfare Officer.
2. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying identified must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
3. Actions will be taken to attempt to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
4. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the County FA Welfare Officer for advice and to The FA Case Management Team if deemed severe.
5. Parents should be informed and will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the incident.
6. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.
7. If necessary and appropriate, the Police will be consulted.



### ***Club Action for Children to Children Bullying***

If the club decides it is appropriate for them to handle the situation internally they should follow the procedure outlined below:

1. Get the parties together for reconciliation, it may be that a genuine apology resolves the problem.
2. If a reconciliation process is not appropriate or fails a panel (made up from Chairperson, Club Welfare Officer, Secretary, Committee Members) will meet with the parent/carer and child/young person alleging bullying to obtain details of the allegation. Minutes will be taken for clarity, which will be agreed by all parties as a true account of the meeting.
3. The panel will meet with the alleged bully and his/her parents/carers and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their views of the allegation. Minutes will again be taken and agreed.
4. If bullying has in the panels view taken place the individual will be warned and put on notice of further action, i.e. temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration will be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this stage.
5. In some cases the parents/carers of both the bully and bullied will be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate. The club committee will monitor the situation for a given period to ensure that the bullying is not being repeated.
6. All coaches linked to the individuals involved in the incident(s) will be made aware and advised the outcome of the process, i.e. warning.

### ***Club Action for Adult Bullying***

In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone, the following protocols are to be followed:

1. The County FA Welfare Officer should be informed and will advise on action to be taken where appropriate, this may include action by the FA Safeguarding Team.
2. Where allegations are made and proven regarding a team manager, coach or official they will be asked to complete an FA's Safeguarding refresher programme.
3. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's Social Care Services.



### **Prevention**

- 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/carers will sign to accept the constitution when registering to the club.
- The Club Welfare Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters that the club works together to eradicate and prevent. If issues of bullying do arise in the club, the Welfare Officer will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

This policy is based on guidance provided to clubs by **KIDSCAPE** which is a voluntary organisation committed to helping prevent child bullying. **KIDSCAPE** can be contacted on **0207 730 3300** or **info@kidscape.org.uk** For further information you can access their website, **www.kidscape.org.uk**.

The following websites are also available to access and are designed to give advice and guidance to parents/carers and children/young people who are faced with dealing with bullying:

#### **Guidance for parents/carers**

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

[www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

#### **Guidance for children/young people**

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)