

Anti-Bullying Policy

Principles and Values

At Pearl Gymnastics we take bullying and its impact seriously. Gymnasts and parents should be assured that known incidents of bullying will be responded to. Bullying will not be tolerated.

Objectives of this Policy

- All Coaches, administrative staff, gymnasts and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All Coaches and administrative staff should know what the Clubs policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All gymnasts and parents should know what the Club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

All of us have encountered bullying at some point in our lives, but we all deal with it differently. The aim of this policy is to work together to ensure that our Club is a safe place for children and adults to be; whether the Club community is directly or indirectly affected by bullying or not.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is unacceptable behaviour used by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

In other words, bullying at Pearl Gymnastics is considered to be, “unacceptable behaviour which occurs ‘lots of times, on purpose’.”

Bullying can be short term or continuous over long periods of time.

Bullying can be:

Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding equipment, threatening gestures)
Physical pushing, kicking, biting, hitting, punching or any use of violence.

Racial: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

Homophobic: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality

Bullying may be direct or indirect

Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

Cyber bullying All areas of internet, such as email and internet chat Twitter, Facebook misuse

Mobile threats by text messaging and calls

Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities, Ipad, games consoles

Bullying may be related to:

Race, Gender, Religion, Culture, SEN or disability, Appearance or health condition, Home circumstances, young carers and poverty, Sexual orientation, sexism, or sexual bullying.

Bullying can take place in the gymnasium, waiting area, changing area, toilets, on the journey to and from the Club, on residential trips and cyberspace. It can take place in group activities and

between families in the local community.
Perpetrators and Victims

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of one person or persons over another.

This can be achieved by:

- The size of the individual,
- The strength of the individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying or using email, social networking sites, texts

All Staff and Coaches must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs which means that they may be unable to realise what others may be doing to them.

Staff and Coaches must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable gymnasts; those coming from troubled families, or those responding to emotional problems or mental health issues which may bring about a propensity to be unkind to others, or may make them more likely to fall victim to the behaviour of others.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Gymnasts who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Outcomes

All known/reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by the Welfare Officer or by a senior member of staff.

Parents of the perpetrator may also be questioned about the incident or about any concerns that they may be having.

The child displaying unacceptable behaviour may be asked to genuinely apologise (as appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding) other consequences may take place. Eg a parent being informed about their child's behaviour and a request that the parents support the Club with any sanctions that it takes (See Behaviour Policy and Codes of Conduct). Wherever possible, the gymnasts will be reconciled.

In some cases, outside agencies may be requested to support the Club or family in dealing with a child continually demonstrating unacceptable behaviour towards others. eg police, counsellor, *Social Care*.

In serious cases (this is defined as children displaying an on-going lack of response to sanctions, that is, no change in behaviour of the perpetrator and an unwillingness to alter their behaviour choices), exclusion from Pearl Gymnastics will be considered.

During and after the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be recorded in the Bullying Log and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. The Welfare Officer will be informed of any incidents recorded in the log along with incidents, sanctions and reconciliation.

Prevention

At Pearl Gymnastics we use a variety of methods to support children in preventing them using abusive behaviour.

The ethos and working philosophy of Pearl Gymnastics means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property.

Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded. Coaches will regularly discuss bullying, this will inform children that we are serious about dealing with bullying and leads to open conversations and increased confidence in children to want to discuss bullying and report any incidents and concerns about other children's behaviour.

Coaches and Welfare officers to follow the equality policy; supporting every child in our Club. Staff

must be careful not to highlight differences of children or an individual child, even if this is done in jest. This gives other children advocacy to use this difference to begin calling names or teasing. Staff must reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.

If a child feels that they are being bullied then there are several procedures that they are encouraged to follow: (not hierarchical)

- Tell a friend
- Tell your Welfare Officer or coach whom you feel you can trust
- Write your concern and post it in the 'worry box'
- Tell a parent or adult at home whom you feel you can trust
- Visit the Club website for ideas of what to do next.

Recording of Bullying Incidents

When an incident of bullying has taken place, staff must be prepared to record and report each incident to the Welfare officer.

General incidences of bullying should be recorded in the Behaviour Log this would include incidents where staff have had to become involved and speak with children, and/or where parents have raised concerns regarding bullying. Confirmed cases of bullying must be recorded following the safeguarding procedure, as with any case of Child Protection.

All incidents of bullying will be discussed with all relevant staff and parents of the children involved, in order that everyone can be vigilant and that further incidents by the same child(ren) may be prevented from happening in the future.

Advice to Parents

As the parent of a child whom you suspect is being bullied

1. Report bullying incidents to the Welfare Officer
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff and the Head Coach notified.
3. In serious cases parents will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, 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 child using unacceptable behaviour towards others, to change their behaviour.

Do Not:

1. Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be behaving inappropriately towards your child or by speaking to their parents.
2. Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back.

Both of these will only make the problem much harder to solve.