

East Dorset Dockers RFC Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Our Commitment

East Dorset Dockers Rugby Football Club is committed to providing a positive, friendly, and safe environment for all members (players, coaches, officials, parents, and spectators). We believe that bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy applies to all club activities, on and off the pitch, including training, matches, social events, and online communication (social media, messaging groups).

2. What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined as repetitive, intentional behavior that hurts another person, either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms:

- Verbal: Name calling, teasing, spreading rumours, making threats, offensive remarks about a person's ability, appearance, or background.
- Physical: Any unwanted physical touch, such as hitting, kicking, pushing, stealing. This also includes damaging personal property.
- Emotional/social: Excluding someone from a group or activity, isolating them, ignoring them, or manipulating friendships.
- Cyber: Sending hurtful messages, pictures, or videos via phone or the internet; posting embarrassing information or malicious rumors on social media.

3. Scope and Responsibility

This policy applies to all members of the East Dorset Dockers, regardless of age, playing level, or role (including coaches, match officials, and committee members). Every club member has a responsibility to:

- Treat others with respect and dignity.
- Not engage in any form of bullying.
- Report bullying they see or experience.

4. Reporting Procedures

If you, or someone you know, is being bullied, you should report the incident immediately.

A. Who to Report To

Incidents should be reported to the club's dedicated Safeguarding Officer or to the Club Chairman or Secretary, if a member is unable to report to any of the outlined positions, then any committee member will be appropriate and can raise it further.

B. How to Report

1. **Immediate Verbal Report:** Speak to the designated person/s as soon as possible.
2. **Written Report:** The person receiving the verbal report (or the person reporting the incident) must document it in writing. This report should include:
 - The date, time, and location of the incident/s.
 - The names of the individual/s involved (the alleged bully/bullies and the victim/s).
 - A factual description of what happened.
 - Names of any witnesses.

Note for Youth & Mini Sections: Players should be encouraged to tell their coach or parent, who must then relay the information directly to the Safeguarding Officer.

5. Investigation and Response

The Disciplinary Committee, or a designated small sub-committee, will manage the investigation process, following the club's established Disciplinary Procedure.

1. **Confidentiality:** All reports will be handled with discretion and confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible, consistent with the need to conduct a fair investigation.
2. **Fairness:** Both the person reporting the bullying (the victim) and the person/s accused of bullying will be listened to. They will be informed of the allegations and allowed to present their side and provide evidence or witnesses.
3. **Resolution:** The objective is to stop the bullying behavior immediately, protect the victim, and find a resolution.

6. Sanctions and Consequences

If the allegation of bullying is proven following an investigation, disciplinary action will be taken. Penalties will be consistent with the severity of the offense and the club's Disciplinary Policy.

Possible sanctions include:

- A formal verbal or written reprimand/caution.
- A requirement to apologize to the affected party.
- A period of suspension from playing, coaching, or attending club activities.
- Revocation of Membership from the club

Policy Review: This policy will be reviewed and updated by the Club Committee when needed.

