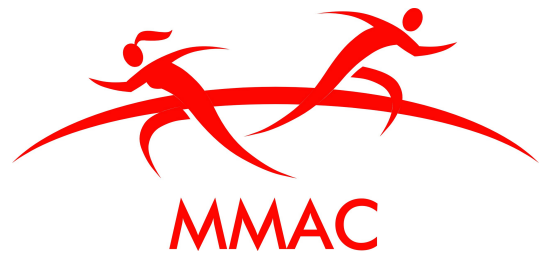


Anti-Bullying Policy



Mount Merrion Athletics Club
Phone: 0851680029
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Bullying has no place in athletics and should not be tolerated. The Mount Merrion Athletics Club promotes a positive anti-bullying ethos and implements best practice, together with raising awareness amongst coaches and volunteers.

All Members must be aware and comply with the Clubs and the Athletics Association of Ireland's Code of Conduct and Behaviour, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.

What is Bullying?

Bullying can be defined as follows: repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological, or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

Bullying is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and it includes behaviour such as teasing, taunting, exclusion, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions, threatening gestures), threatening, spreading rumours, hitting and extortion, by one or more persons against a victim.

Bullying has 7 key features:

1. An intention to be hurtful
2. The intention is carried out
3. The behaviour harms the target
4. The bully overwhelms the target with his or her power
5. There is often no justification for the action
6. The behaviour repeats itself again and again
7. The bully derives a sense of satisfaction from hurting the target

All bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear. Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so.

The Effects of Bullying

The effects of bullying can last for some time and can significantly affect an individual's well-being, causing poor social development and depression. The outcomes of bullying can include:

- Physical injury, headaches, stomach aches.
- Stress symptoms such as sleeping and/or eating disorders and/or panic attacks
- Loss of confidence and self esteem.
- Lowered academic achievement.
- Exclusion and isolation
- Consideration of suicide.
- Club members will take a pro-active role in investigating whether bullying is occurring.

Warning Signs That a Young Person Might be Getting Bullied

The following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied and they are:

- Reluctance to come to a venue or take part in activities.
- Physical signs (unexplained bruises, scratches, or damage to belongings).
- Stress-caused illness – headaches, and stomach aches which seem unexplained.
- Fearful behaviour (fear of walking to a meeting, going different routes, asking to be driven).
- Frequent loss of, or shortage of, money with vague explanations.
- Having few friends.
- Changes in behaviour (withdrawn, stammering, moody, irritable, upset, distressed).
- Not eating.
- Attempting suicide or hinting at suicide.
- Anxiety (shown by nail-biting, fearfulness, tics).

There are other possible reasons for many of the above and may not have any relevance to the club MMAC, however we would ask that Guardians/parents be vigilant of these behaviours and that all members children and adults be aware that all bullies operate using furtiveness, threats and fear.

Bullying can therefore only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in which it is not safe to do so.

What Will MMAC Do if a Child Tells Us He/She is Being Bullied?

1. Listen....to the victim

When an incident is reported, the members will listen calmly and accept what is said. If possible there should be two club members present (but this should be determined by the needs of the child)

2. Notes following the conversation will be taken

Following the initial reporting conversation, notes will taken and kept on file as this forms the basis of the bullying report.

The notes should include nature of incident, date, time, location, names of those involved, bystanders/witnesses, relevant history and club members response.

3. Reassure...

The Victim will be assured that help is available, action will be taken, that the child was right to tell, it is not his/her fault and it could happen to anyone.

4. Negotiate in a confidential environment

Only the persons who need to know will be told of the incident.

5. Ensure the child's safety....

Club members should be aware that the safety of the youth member is paramount, and this can be maintained through appropriate supervision. Liaise with the parents/guardians in relation to a solution and possible actions.

1. The child will be kept informed of how the matter is to proceed.
2. Intervention
3. All Club actions shall be guided by the needs of the child:
 - Decide the parties to consult with: Child Protection/Welfare Officer, Parents, Guardians.

- Decide who to interview: bystanders/witnesses, alleged bullies, and uninvolved children.
- Find out: what, where, when, who, how, why? Act in a non-confrontational manner.
- Resolve the problem: Make bullying the responsibility of the Group following the “No Blame” group approach.
- Alternatively, approach the victim and the bully (explain why the bully's behaviour is wrong, how it makes the victim feel and request an apology);parents and bully (if sanctions linked to behaviour are to be employed, request the parents to reinforce these). Refer on in difficult cases...

Make a record....

Of facts rather than opinions.

Include details from the bullying report (i.e. nature of incident, date, time, location, names of those involved, witnesses, relevant history and club members response), details recounted by others involved, any agreements made, an account of action taken and suggestions for follow up and monitoring.

For all issues we will fill out a standard form taken from the Code of Best Practice.

Bullying Report Form



Mount Merrion Athletics Club
Phone: 0851680029
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Please complete all details below in BLOCK CAPITALS:

Date:

Time:

Child:

Names of those involved:

Details of Incident(s):

Action Taken (Warning, Agreement, Mediation, Sanctions, Referral, Other):

Suggestions for follow up:

Signature _____