



# VERWOOD TOWN YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB

## *Anti Bullying Policy and Guidance*

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### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Verwood Town Football Club is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people to enjoy Youth Football.
- 1.2. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our club. If bullying does occur, all club members or parents 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 committee member.
- 1.3. 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. This club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### **2. What is Bullying?**

- 2.1. 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:
  - a) **Emotional**; including being unfriendly, excluding someone (emotionally and physically) from the team, sending hurtful text messages and tormenting, (e.g. hiding football boots/shin guards, threatening gestures)
  - b) **Physical**; including pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
  - c) **Racist**; including racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
  - d) **Sexual**; including unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
  - e) **Homophobic**; including bullying because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
  - f) **Verbal**; including name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.

### **3. Indicators when a child may be being bullied**

- 3.1. A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:
  - a) says he or she is being bullied
  - b) is unwilling to go to club sessions
  - c) becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
  - d) feels ill before training sessions
  - e) comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged
  - f) has possessions go "missing"
  - g) asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)

- h) has unexplained cuts or bruises
- i) is frightened to say what's wrong
- j) gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

#### **4. Procedures to be followed when bullying is reported**

- a) Reports of bullying incidents should be made to the Club Welfare Officer (below) or a member of the clubs committee or contact the Dorset County FA Welfare Officer.
- b) In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred by VTFC to the County FA Welfare Officer for advice and possibly to The FA Case Management Team.
- c) Parents shall be informed and will be asked to come in to a mediation meeting to discuss the problem with relevant club committee members (Child Welfare Officer, Chairman, and one other) and seek resolution between the parties.
- d) If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
- e) An attempt will be made by the club to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
- f) If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club disciplinary policy which may result in suspension or expulsion from the club for the bully or bullies.

#### **5. Our Child Welfare Officer**

- 5.1. The Child Welfare Officer will take specific responsibility for child safety and act as the main point of contact for parents, children and outside agencies. In addition he/she will:
  - a) Provide information as required to the management committee.
  - b) Review the effectiveness of our Child Welfare Policy and activities each year at the Annual General Meeting.
  - c) Operate within the guidelines set by the Football Association.

#### **6. Reporting concerns**

- 6.1. Anyone can report any child welfare issues observed to any member of the committee, but are highly recommended to contact our Child Welfare Officer on - **Child\_Welfare@VTFC.co.uk** or by phone on **07900 365461**
- 6.2. call The NSPCC 24-hour helpline on **0808 800 5000** – or if it is an emergency because a child or children are at immediate risk, then call the police or children's social care in your area. or The FA via **[safeguarding@thefa.com](mailto:safeguarding@thefa.com)**