



ECFC Academy Anti-Bullying Policy

2018/19

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ECFC Academy Anti-Bullying Policy

1.0 Introduction

This document sets out the guidelines in relation to the issue of bullying. It reflects a belief that bullying is not acceptable under any circumstances and that it is best prevented through the development of an ethos based on mutual respect, fairness and equality. It also acknowledges that bullying behaviour is problematic for the victim and perpetrator alike and embodies support and management strategies that are pragmatic and non-oppressive.

2.0 Principles

All players have an absolute right to be educated and trained in a safe and secure environment and be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse them.

There is **no justification whatsoever** for bullying behaviour and it should not be viewed as acceptable in any form. Differences of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability are absolutely repudiated as reasons for bullying.

Bullying behaviour is a problem for both the perpetrator and the victim and should be addressed in positive and constructive ways that provide opportunities for growth and development for the bully and victim alike.

Effective management of bullying is a shared responsibility and strategies should involve ECFC Academy staff; parents/carers and other professionals involved with children who are the victims or perpetrators of bullying behaviour.

It is important to invest realistic and appropriate levels of time & resources in preventing & managing bullying.

Academy policy and procedures should be readily available in 'user-friendly' format for young players and their parents/carers.

3.0 Definition

Any interaction between an individual or group of people with a more powerful individual or group **perceived** or **intended** to cause hurt, pain, suffering, humiliation or degradation.

Bullying behaviour may be direct or indirect. Direct forms include physical violence and threats; verbal assaults and taunts; the destruction of property; extortion; unwanted sexual interest or contact. Examples of indirect forms of bullying include ignoring and the withdrawal of friendship; excluding; malicious gossip and spreading rumour; abusive or oppressive graffiti.

ECFC Academy takes all forms of bullying seriously and is particularly concerned to take action in relation to any incidents involving racist, sexist, disability or homophobic elements.

In such cases these issues will be specifically addressed with the perpetrator and his/her parents/carers, in the course of post incident management.

4.0 Scope

This policy applies only to incidents of bullying which take place during Academy training, match days (including travelling), education and any other time where the Academy players and staff get together. ECFC Academy is not **legally** responsible for bullying which takes place elsewhere.

- If there are more general concerns about children's safety outside of the Academy's responsibilities then the Local Safeguarding Board will be contacted and their help sought.
- If concerns arise in relation to transport then the issue will be raised with the transport companies and their help sought in dealing with the problem.
- If information is received that a sibling outside of Academy time is bullying a player; this will initially be brought to the attention of the parents/carer.
- Should there be evidence of persistence in these types of actions: the matter will, in consultation, be referred in accordance with Academy procedure.

5.0 Aims

- To fulfil the Club and Academy's statutory responsibility to respect the rights of young players and to safeguard and promote their welfare.
- To clarify the Academy's responsibility for responding to incidents of bullying and to emphasise to staff, players and their parents/carers the Academy's attitude towards bullying behaviour.
- To eliminate intimidating behaviour and promote an ethos in which young players are safe and able to realise their full potential.
- To address all incidents of bullying and bring it under control through the implementation of the Academy Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures.
- To reassure parents/carers that the Academy takes the welfare and well-being of young players seriously and that they are being educated in a safe and secure environment.

6.0 Objectives

- Implement an anti-bullying policy based on a consistently implemented anti-bullying procedure.
- Raise awareness among staff; parents/carers and players about bullying and create an environment in which bullying is inappropriate and unacceptable.
- Be proactive in the prevention of bullying.
- Ensure young players, parents/carers and staff are aware of the steps to take when a bullying incident has occurred.
- Make clear that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to reassure victims that appropriate action will be taken to keep them safe.
- Accurately record all incidents of bullying and evaluate the effectiveness of applied satisfactory resolution strategies.
- Address perpetrators' behaviour in a fair, firm, & non-oppressive manner.

7.0 Prevention

All Academy staff involved need to be made aware of bullying as a potential issue and the need to consistently apply the Club's policy. Staff will be proactive in reinforcing the message to players that bullying is unacceptable.

The Academy recognises that there are particular times when players may be more vulnerable to bullying, such as: transport to games, breaks on match days in changing rooms and at the beginning and end of the training sessions.

Additionally, the issue will be raised with players at a number of levels including:

- At age group level – e.g. during training time, classroom sessions.
- At individual level – attention will be paid to young players who are felt to be at risk of bullying or who have suffered from bullying in the past.
- Players who have bullied others will be made aware of the Academy outlook as a central element of a personalised prevention strategy.
- Arrangements will be made to ensure that there is adequate supervision available to reduce any potential risks of bullying incidents.
- Players will be encouraged to talk to staff about incidents of bullying they experience or of which they may be aware. In these circumstances staff will respond positively, take the expression of concern seriously.
- Parents who believe their son is a victim of bullying inside the Academy or elsewhere should share their concerns with the staff, in confidence and be prepared to work collaboratively to keep their children safe in future.
- Similarly if parents believe their child is bullying others; this should be shared with the Academy so that the problem can be mutually addressed and an agreed plan made to prevent any possible further incidents.

All preventative strategies operate within a Club ethos founded of equality, fairness and respect for others in which individual differences are celebrated. In order to help children learn and develop appropriate responses to others, staff will treat each other (including children, parents and carers) with courtesy, respect and will model appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

8.0 Parental Involvement

The Academy is firmly committed to working in partnership with parents/carers and believes that the best outcomes emerge when staff and parents/carers are able to work together.

The Academy recognises the important influence that parents/carers have on their children and would aim to enlist their support when their child is involved in bullying – either as victim or a perpetrator.

If a player is involved in a single serious incident of bullying or there is evidence that the same player is involved repeatedly in less serious incidents (either as a victim or a perpetrator): The Academy will inform parents/carers and invite them to become involved in the management of the problem and the prevention of further incidents.

Isolated and less serious incidents will be managed by Academy staff and inform parental/carers of any actions and consequences.

9.0 Implementation

The Academy is committed to creating an environment free from bullying and will ensure that its policy is applied. All staff involved in the coaching and/or supervision of players will take responsibility for addressing incidents which fall within the Academy's definition of bullying and ensure that the victim receives the support required; the perpetrator is informed of his/her unacceptable behaviour and a record made of the incident.

All players need to be aware that staff wishes to be informed of any incidents or concerns and that action will be taken when bullying is reported.

10.0 Incident Management

Action will be taken to deal with any witnessed or reported incident in accordance with Academy procedure. When a member of staff receives information, either directly or

indirectly that a player may have been the victim of a bullying incident, this report will be taken seriously and investigated accordingly.

The exact nature of the response will be determined by the players' individual needs and may include:

- Immediate action to stop the incident and secure the player's safety
- Positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the correct thing to do
- Reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the bully's behaviour
- Informing and involving parents/carers
- Agreed staff/parent/carer strategies to prevent further incidents
- Arrangements to review progress

11.0 For the Perpetrator

The Academy takes bullying behaviour seriously and will adopt a supportive, pragmatic, problem-solving approach to enable perpetrators to behave in a more acceptable way. The Academy does not believe that the use of punishment is helpful in managing this problem but is of the view that the positive use of sanctions can be useful in demonstrating that their behaviour is unacceptable and is designed to serve as an element of promoting change.

The Academy will respond to incidents of bullying behaviour in a proportionate way – the more serious the cause for concern the more serious the response. When sanctions are felt to be necessary they will be applied consistently and fairly and the following options will be considered:

Immediate action to stop an incident of bullying in progress:

- Engage with the bully to reinforce the message that their behaviour is a breach of Club & Academy Rules and is unacceptable
- Parents/carers informed
- Loss of training and match day privileges
- Removal from team for a specified time
- Reinforcement of Club and Academy anti-bullying policy
- Discussion and agreement of prevention strategies aimed at affecting and improving future behaviour
- Fixed periods of exclusion from the academy
- Permanent exclusion from the Academy in extreme &/or persistent cases

12.0 Allegations Regarding Staff

Staff are committed to ensuring that all registered and trialling players at the Academy have a safe, happy, enjoyable and industrious place to play.

However, any concerns regarding staff behaviour that could jeopardise the above, should be brought to the attention of the Senior Managers. In so doing: the following procedures will be pursued:

- Informal complaint i.e. Concerns from parents or young players verbally brought to the attention of Academy Head of Education & Welfare and Academy Leadership Team (Academy Operations Manager and/or Head of Coaching)
- Academy Leadership will then raise any allegations and/or concerns with the member of staff in question
- Such conversation(s) will be recorded as will any further enquiries with other staff, responsible adults and (in some instances) players who may have been witness to any alleged incident

- Academy Leadership will inform relevant Academy Management Team staff, record findings and relay back to the Academy Leadership Team
- Should findings be inclusive and a resolution found: no further action will be taken
- If there is sufficient evidence, the disciplinary process may be invoked

12.1. Formal Allegation

- Should a formal written allegation be made; the same procedure will follow (as above) in the first instance although this will be supported by the ECFC Human Resources (HR)
- Staff member will be made aware & recorded interview conducted
- 360 review of the staff in action will be undertaken & recorded
- If a coach or physical scientist: observation in practice will be undertaken
- All recorded findings will be handed to HR
- HR will lead on the process in accordance with disciplinary Club policy
- Pursuant of disciplinary investigations witness statements will be taken, with possible police involvement (in extreme cases)
- It may be necessary to suspend the member of staff on basic pay pending the disciplinary process, this may be a safety precaution for all concerned which attracts no prejudgement of guilt
- If no case to answer: no further action
- If found guilty following the disciplinary hearing the individual concerned may face a summary dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct. If misconduct: a formal written warning and remedial training will be incorporated into Personal Action Plan as a joint HR/Academy action
- Parents/carers, within the confines of Data Protection legislation, will be informed in general ie that the Academy has taken further action
- Any further actions deemed necessary by outside Authorities will be taken within their jurisdiction

13.0 Monitoring and Evaluating

Full and active reference to policy & practice are prioritised in association with Key Agencies, to include (principally): the Local Safeguarding Board and EFL Safeguarding and Child Protection advisory services.

Incidents of bullying falling within the Academy definition will be recorded, with any incidents with a racist, sexist, disability or homophobic element identified.

Senior Club and Academy staff will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and agree any possible adjustments to address possible concerns. Changes and amendments will be shared with staff, parents/carers and players.

NOTE

This policy & procedure is subject to revision to align with any possible changes in legislative direction and subsequent HR policy.

Date

14 January 2018