



PHOENIX SPORTS CLUB

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. This policy will:
 - a. Set out Phoenix Sports Club's definition of bullying.
 - b. Set out how Phoenix Sports Club will approach disclosures and allegations of bullying.
 - c. Set out how Phoenix Sports Club will seek to prevent instances of bullying and create a zero-tolerance culture for bullying.
2. It is drafted in line with FA Guidance and relevant legislation.
3. It will be subject to amendments, removals, and additions as agreed upon by the Club Committee, except on matters reserved to the Board who will in such cases hold jurisdiction.
4. It has been absorbed into Club policy and dictates the Club's approach to bullying.
5. It cannot supersede any aspect of the Club's safeguarding policies or statute or instrument binding on the Club and should only be used in conjunction with said policies and legislation.
6. This policy was reviewed on 23rd June 2024, and is binding in respect of the 2024/2025 season onwards.

Section 1 – Reader guidance

1. This policy should be interpreted and applied in conjunction with the Club's wider policies on safeguarding, including:
 - a. Safeguarding Children Policy;
 - b. Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy;
 - c. Code of Conduct;
 - d. Social Media Policy.
2. Definitions:
 - a. A **child** is a person aged eighteen or under¹;
 - i. this is applicable to the plural of **children**.
 - b. **Members** shall refer to players;
 - i. this is applicable to open-age and youth teams.
 - c. Ordinary definitions should always be applied to this policy.

Section 2 – Statement of intent

3. Phoenix Sports Club are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our members, so they can participate in and observe football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.
4. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Phoenix Sports Club.
5. If bullying does occur all Club members or parents should feel able to tell and be confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
6. Phoenix Sports Club are a telling club;
 - a. this means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to the Club Welfare Officer or any other committee member.
7. This Club is committed to playing its part to teach players to treat each other with respect.

Section 3 – Objectives of this policy

8. All Club members, coaches, officials and parents should understand what bullying is.

¹ Children Act, 1989.

9. All club members, coaching staff and officials should know what the club policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
10. All players and parents should know what the club policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
11. As a club we take bullying seriously.
12. Players and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.
13. Bullying will **not be tolerated**.

Section 4 – What is bullying?

14. Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.
15. It can happen face-to-face or digitally, and comes in many forms:
 - a. **Verbal:** name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours and teasing;
 - b. **Physical:** any form of physical violence, intimidating behaviour, theft or the intentional damage of possessions;
 - c. **Emotional:** excluding, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, setting people up and spreading rumours.
 - d. **Cyberbullying:** the misuse of digital technologies or communication to bully a person or a group, typically through messages or actions that are threatening and/or intended to cause offence, anxiety or humiliation;
 - i. examples of cyberbullying include:
 1. abusive comments, rumours, gossip, and threats made using digital communications and/ or technologies;
 - a. this includes internet trolling.
 2. sharing pictures, videos, or personal information without the consent of the owner and with the intent to cause harm or humiliation;
 3. hacking into someone's email, phone, or online profiles to extract and share personal information, or to send hurtful content while posing as that person;
 4. creating dedicated websites that intend harm, make fun of someone, or spread malicious rumours;

5. pressurising someone to do something they do not want to, such as sending a sexually explicit.
16. Phoenix Sports Club commits to ensure our websites, social networking pages and digital systems are being used appropriately and any online bullying will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately in line with procedures detailed in this policy.
 17. Phoenix Sports Club recognises that some forms of bullying, defined above, constitute criminal offences:
 - a. targeting protected characteristics may represent a hate crime²;
 - i. protected characteristics³ include:
 1. race;
 2. religion;
 3. gender, or gender reassignment;
 4. sexuality;
 5. disability.
 - b. the distribution of pictures and videos:
 - i. without consent is a crime⁴;
 - ii. of a child, with or without consent, is a crime⁵.
 - c. physical bullying may constitute assault, in any of its forms as defined by statute⁶;
 - d. Phoenix Sports Club will always seek the involvement of the police if a crime has been or is thought to have been committed.

Section 5 – Why does bullying take place?

18. People can be targeted for any reason, but people who bully others target `difference` and bullying can be a form of wider discrimination.
19. For example, bullying behaviour may be:
 - a. **Racist:** Targeted at ethnicity, skin colour, and language, religious or cultural practices’;

² Crime and Disorder Act 1998; Sentencing Act 2020, s 66.

³ Equality Act, 2010.

⁴ Online Safety Act 2023.

⁵ Criminal Justice Act 1988, s 160.

⁶ Offences Against the Person Act 1861.

- b. **Homophobic, biphobic and/or transphobic:** Targeted at actual or perceived sexuality and/or gender;
- c. **Sexual and/or sexist:** This is behaviour that is intended to cause offence, humiliation, or intimidation;
- d. **Disablist:** Targeted at an impaired or special educational need;
- e. **Targeting and difference:** Bullying can also be targeted at 'looks,' weight and height, colour of hair, wearing glasses or braces, acne, psoriasis and eczema, scars, marks or conditions of the face or body, body odour, poverty, gifts and talents or family situation (E.g. divorce, bereavement, homelessness);
- f. **Discrimination:** Bullying because of discrimination occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against certain people or groups of people. This may be because of their gender, age, race, nationality, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability, or ability;

Section 6 – Why is it important to respond to bullying?

- 20. Bullying hurts.
- 21. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and no one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.
- 22. Phoenix Sports Club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Section 7 – Signs and indicators of bullying

- 23. 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;

- i. this can be 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.
24. In more extreme cases, a child or young person may:
- a. start stammering;
 - b. cry themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
 - c. become aggressive, disruptive, or unreasonable;
 - d. start bullying other children or siblings;
 - e. stop eating;
 - f. attempt or threaten suicide or run away.
 - i. These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.
 - ii. Adults experiencing bullying may also display these signs and behaviours.

Section 8 – Procedures

- 25. Report bullying incidents to the Club Welfare Officer, Assistant Welfare Officer, or a member of the Club's Committee or Board.
- 26. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be referred to the County FA Welfare Officer for advice and to the national FA Case Management Team.
- 27. Parents will be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem:
 - a. if an individual under eighteen is involved.
- 28. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
- 29. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly.
- 30. An attempt will be made to help the bully, or bullies, change their behaviour.
- 31. If mediation fails and the bullying is seen to continue the club will initiate disciplinary action under the club constitution.

Section 9 – Club action for children bullying children

32. If the Club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow the procedure outlined below:

- a. reconciliation by getting the parties together;
 - i. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
- b. If this fails, or is not appropriate:
 - i. a small panel, comprised of the Chairperson, Club Welfare Officer and Secretary, should meet with the parent and child alleging bullying to get details of the allegation;
 1. minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
 - ii. the same 3 persons should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes should again be taken and agreed.
 - iii. if bullying has, in their view, taken place the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action, such as a temporary, or permanent suspension if the bullying continues;
 1. consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.

33. In some cases, the parent of the bully or bullied player can be asked to attend training sessions, if they are able to do so, and if appropriate;

- a. the club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.

34. All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process.

Section 10 – Club action for adults bullying adults

35. If the Club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should follow the procedure outlined below:

- a. reconciliation by getting the parties together;
 - i. It may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
- b. If this fails, or is not appropriate:

- i. a small panel, comprised of the Chairperson, Club Welfare Officer and Secretary, should meet with the individual alleging bullying to get details of the allegation;
 - 1. the individual should be offered the opportunity to bring a person for support;
 - 2. minutes should be taken for clarity, which should be agreed by all as a true account.
- ii. the same 3 persons should meet with the alleged bully and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation.
 - 1. the individual should be offered the opportunity to bring a person for support;
 - 2. minutes should again be taken and agreed.
- iii. if bullying has, in their view, taken place the individual should be warned and put on notice of further action, such as a temporary, or permanent suspension if the bullying continues;
 - 1. consideration should be given as to whether a reconciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at this time.

36. The club committee should monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated.

37. All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process.

Section 11 – Club action where it is alleged an adult is, or has been, bullying a child

38. If an adult is alleged to be bullying anyone within the Club under the age of eighteen:

- a. The County Welfare Officer will always be informed:
 - i. the County Welfare Officer will advise on the action to be taken, where appropriate, and this may include action by the national FA Safeguarding Team.
 - ii. it is anticipated that, in most cases, where the allegation is made regarding a team manager, official or coach, the FA's Safeguarding Children Education Programme may be recommended.
- b. More serious cases may be referred to the Police and/or Children's

Social Care.

Section 12 – Prevention

39. Phoenix Sports Club written Codes of Conduct which includes what is acceptable and proper behaviour for all members, of which the anti-bullying policy is one part.
40. All club members and parents sign the Codes of Conduct upon joining the club.
41. The Club Welfare Officer will raise awareness about bullying and why it matters;
 - a. and, if issues of bullying arise in the club, will consider meeting with members to discuss the issue openly and constructively.

Section 13 – Contact information

42. Designated Safeguarding Lead (Board):

- a. Warren Strong
- b. warren.phoenixsports@outlook.com
- c. 07532 697 492

43. Club Welfare Officer (Adult and Youth):

- a. Warren Strong
- b. warren.phoenixsports@outlook.com
- c. 07532 697 492

44. If at any time you are not able to contact the Club Welfare Officer, or the matter is clearly serious, then you can contact your County FA Welfare Officer directly:

- a. Kent County Football Association
- b. Designated Safeguarding Officer: Lucy Kidd
- c. safeguarding@kentFA.com
- d. 01622 792 140 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

45. You can also contact the National League Designated Safeguarding Officer, for matters concerning Phoenix Sports Club First Team, playing in the Pitching In Isthmian League (South East):

- a. Martyn Cannon
- b. safeguarding@thenationalleague.org.uk
- c. 01217 142 207

46. You may wish to access any of the following websites designed to give advice to parents and children who are with bullying:

- a. Guidance for young people:
 - i. www.youngstonewall.org.uk

ii. www.childline.org.uk

b. Guidance for parents/carers:

i. www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

ii. www.stonewall.org.uk

iii. www.bullying.co.uk