



ANTI BULLYING POLICY

BUSHIDO KARATE CLUB
POLICY DOCUMENT

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Anti-Bullying Policy



POLICY No: BKK/AB/01

Rev 1

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Club maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy against bullying, whether it originates from members or instructors or is directed towards individuals inside and outside the club. Any form of bullying is unacceptable, and the club firmly prohibits such behaviour among its members and instructors. Our primary goal is to prevent bullying entirely. All members must follow codes of conduct to ensure everyone's safety and security, regardless of age. Each member is responsible for reporting any instances of bullying as soon as they become aware of them.

2. STAKEHOLDERS

The following are the individuals/entities governed by this policy document, and for this document's purpose, the following terms shall refer to:

Organisation: Shotokan Karate-Do International Federation Ireland (SKIF Ireland).

Club: Bushido Karate Club.

Member: a current member of the club.

Instructor: an Instructor within the club.

Club Instructor: the head instructor(s) of the club.

Child/Young/Young People: any individual under 18.

Volunteer: any individual appointed by the club to work with young people.

Parent: a parent, legal guardian or carer of a child.

National Child Welfare Officer (NCWO): an individual designated to be responsible for protecting and safeguarding young people within the organisation.

Club Child Welfare Officer (CWO): an individual designated to deal with matters concerning the protection and safeguarding of young people within the club. All affiliated clubs shall have an appointed CWO; this individual cannot be a club instructor but may also fulfil the Designated Liaison Officer role. The CWO shall have the appropriate training for the role.

National Designated Liaison Officer (NDLO): a person at the organisation level responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Statutory Authorities.

Designated Liaison Officer (DLO): an individual responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the statutory authorities. All affiliated clubs shall have an appointed designated liaison officer; this individual may also fulfil the Child Welfare Officer role. The DLO shall have the appropriate training for the role.

Person of Authority: Club Child Welfare Officer, Designated Liaison Officer, Club Instructor, Instructor, Volunteer, Parent, National Child Welfare Officer, National Designated Liaison Officer

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3. WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with people of all ages.

Bullying is about

- A disproportion of power between the victim or bully,
- Power and control which the bully exerts,
- Acts which intentionally hurt or harm another person (also known as the target),
- The target needs help stopping the action directed towards them.

It includes (but is not limited to) behaviours by one or more people against a victim, such as hitting, extortion, teasing, taunting or threatening, which can occur via online contacts such as social media or text or other message services.

There are numerous different types of adult bullies, some of which include;

Authoritarian bully: These bullies like to use their formal power, for example, a Sensei, instructor or Coach, to coerce or control their target.

Verbal Bully: These bullies like to shame and insult you with their words. Often, they throw constant criticism or use cruel teasing, frequently incorporating language which is sexist, racist, homophobic or threatening.

Passive-Aggressive Bully: These bullies act amicably on the outside but take unexpected swings at you. They thrive on gossip, sarcasm and hurtful jokes and often isolate their targets, causing them to feel anxious and insecure.

Cyberbullying: These bullies hide behind the veil of social media to criticise their targets by posting harmful content and sending harassing emails or text messages.

Physical Bully: Often recognised by their aggressive behaviour, which can range from raising their fists, threatening behaviour, intentionally invading personal space, throwing or breaking objects to violent acts of physical, domestic and sexual abuse.

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4. HOW WOULD YOU KNOW IF A MEMBER IS BEING BULLIED?

Bullies often operate in a secretive and sly manner, wishing to conceal their actions. Bullying can, therefore, only survive in an environment where the victim does not feel empowered to tell someone who can help or in an environment in which it is not safe to do so.

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

- 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, of course, other possible reasons for many of the above.

5. WHO SHOULD DEAL WITH BULLYING?

While the more extreme forms of bullying would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse and are reported to the health board or An Garda Síochana, dealing with bullying behaviour is usually the responsibility of the Child Welfare Officer.

Confidential Advice on bullying and how to deal with bullies can be obtained from the Child Welfare Officer or Designated Liaison Officer.

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6. HOW CAN BULLYING BE PREVENTED?

Bullying can be prevented by:

- Ensuring that all members follow the code of conduct promotes each member's rights and dignity (Child and adult alike).
- Dealing with any incidents as they arise.
- Using a whole group policy or 'no-blame approach' (see below for details), i.e., not 'bullying the bully' but working with bullies and the group of young people, helping them to understand the hurt they are causing, and so make the problem a 'shared concern' of the group, (see 'no blame approach')
- Reinforcing there is permission to tell culture rather than a 'might is right'.
- Encouraging young people to negotiate, cooperate and help others, particularly new or different young people.
- Offer the victim immediate support and put the 'no blame approach' into operation.
- Never tell a bullied victim to ignore bullying; they can't ignore it; it hurts too much.
- Never encourage a bullied victim to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game.
- Telling the victim there is nothing wrong with them and that it is not their fault.

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7. USING THE NO-BLAME APPROACH

The NO-BLAME approach (see below for more details) is only one method of dealing with bullying behaviour and is put forward as guidance; other approaches may be considered. This approach may help to restore or repair a previously positive relationship. This also allows the people involved to consider their feelings, their behaviour, and the effects of bullying on everyone.

The NO-BLAME approach seeks to find a resolution for the people involved in the bullying behaviour whilst maintaining their relationship within the organisation. This is important for bullied people who often want the behaviour to stop without a need for punishments to be imposed.

The NO-BLAME approach encourages the bully to recognise the impact of their behaviour and then to take responsibility for changing it. Using this approach, a previous relationship between or within a team can often be re-established; this is usually a preferred option for everyone involved.

The ethos behind the NO-BLAME approach is to:

- **EXPLAIN** the problem, i.e. that someone seems unhappy in the organisation, seems to be picked on, etc. and explain how that person feels; this should not accuse anyone.
- **ASK** for ideas as to how to help this person.
- **LEAVE** the individual/group to put their ideas into practice.
- **MEET** with the individuals involved to check how the behaviour has changed.
- **SHARE** the responsibility of changing the behaviour and encouraging everyone to speak to a trusted adult if bullying occurs.

The NO BLAME approach does not attempt to get 'confessions'; it seeks to acknowledge behaviour and allows bullies to change hurtful behaviour.

There may be issues not resolved through the NO BLAME approach, where behaviour continues. Bullying behaviour is a breach of a code of conduct and may have to be dealt with through a disciplinary process. However, the outcome is far better when issues can be resolved through the NO-BLAME approach.

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8. ANTI-BULLYING "NO-BLAME" APPROACH

Step 1 – Interview with the victim

If you find that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage, discover who was involved and how the victim feels.

Try asking the following questions:

- Was it verbal or physical intimidation?
- How hurt is the victim?
- Was it within their peer group?
- Ensure the victim's name will not be disclosed in the investigation.
- Actively listen.

Step 2 – Meet with all involved

Arrange to meet with all those involved; this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

- Have a maximum of six to eight in the group – keep the number controllable.
- Make a point of calling a 'special' meeting
- Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all.
- Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms without reference to the victim.
- Play on the conscience of all – ask questions like: How would you feel? Would you like it done to you?

Step 3 – Explain the problem

Explain the distress suffered as a result of the bullying incident. At this stage, the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame are not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, or laughed at.

Try asking questions:

- Would they like it if it happened to them?
- "Someone within the group bullied someone here in this group. What could we do to ensure it does not happen again?"
- Listen, watch out for reactions, and pick up on any without isolating anyone.

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Step 4 – Share the responsibility

Explain what steps/controls must be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will lose out.

Step 5 – Ask the group for their ideas

At this stage, the group is encouraged to suggest ways to make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use the phrase “if it were you” to promote a response. Listen to all suggestions and note them.

Step 6 – Leave it to them

The problem has been identified, solutions suggested, and now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet again in a week. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done.

Step 7 – Meet them again

Each group member, including the bully, discusses how things are going, who is doing what, and other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process. Again, enforce the idea of the ‘team’ looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known that bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

9. USE OF SANCTIONS

If bullying behaviour is not resolved, the CWO should discuss the issue with the Club Instructor to decide how to fix it formally. The outcome of this process may impose sanctions on those involved. Sanctions can include time out from events, suspension or expulsion from the club.

10. REVISIONS

REV NO	DATE	CHANGES
0	Jan 2024	Document Created
1	Mar 2024	Document Reworked