

Anti Bullying Policy

Bray Chess Academy wish to provide the best possible environment for all young people involved in chess in Ireland. Young people deserve to be given Enjoyable, Safe Chess Opportunities, Free of Abuse of any kind. All participants have rights, which must be respected, and responsibilities that they must accept. Young people should be encouraged to realise that they have responsibilities to treat other participants and Chess leaders with fairness and respect.

Young players are entitled to:

- (1) Be Listened to;
- (2) Be Believed;
- (3) Be Safe and to Feel Safe;
- (4) Be treated with Dignity, Sensitivity and Respect;
- (5) Have a Voice in the Club;
- (6) Participate on an Equal Basis;
- (7) Be Happy, have Fun and Enjoy chess;
- (8) Experience competition at a level at which they Feel Comfortable;
- (9) Make Complaints and have them Dealt with Fairly and Reasonable;
- (10) Get Help against Bullies;
- (11) Say No;
- (12) To Protect their Own Bodies;
- (13) Confidentiality.

Young players should always:

- (a) Treat Chess Leaders with Respect, e.g. Coaches and Volunteers;
- (b) Play Fairly at all times and do their Best;
- (c) Respect other Members, even when things go wrong;
- (d) Respect Opponents and be Gracious in Defeat;
- (e) Abide by the Rules set down by Club Volunteers when travelling to away assemblies;
- (f) Behave in a manner that avoids bringing Irish Chess into disrepute.
- (g) Talk to the club's Child Protection Officer if they have any problems.

Young Chess Players should never:

- (i) Cheat.
- (ii) Use Violence or Inappropriate Physical Contact.
- (iii) Shout or Argue with Volunteers, Team Mates or Opponents.

- (iv) Harm Team Members, Opponents or their Property,
- (v) Bully or use Bullying Tactics to Isolate another Club Member.
- (vi) Use Unfair or Bullying Tactics to Gain Advantage.
- (viii) Keep Secrets, especially if they Cause Harm of relate to Harm Caused;
- (ix) Tell Lies about Adults or other Young People.
- (x) Spread Rumours.

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 intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly in social environments such as schools, clubs and other organisations working with children and young people. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and extortion behaviour by one or more children against a victim.

How would you know if a child is being bullied?

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 following indicators are warning signs that a young person might be getting bullied.

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

There are other possible reasons for many of the above.

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 HSE/Social Services or to the Gardai (see Code of Ethics). Dealing with bullying behaviour is normally the responsibility of all Volunteers within the club.

How can it be prevented?

Ensure that all members follow the Code of Conduct, which promotes the rights and dignity of each member.

- (a) Deal with any incidents as they arise.
- (b) Use a “Whole Group” policy or a “No-Blame Approach”, i.e., by 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 below)
- (c) Reinforce that there is a “Permission to Tell” culture rather than a “Might is Right”.
- (d) Encourage young people to negotiate, co-operate and help others, particularly new or different children.
- (e) Offer the victim immediate support and put the “No Blame Approach” into operation.
- (f) Never tell a young person to ignore bullying, they can’t ignore it, it hurts too much.
- (g) Never encourage a young person to take the law into their own hands and beat the bully at their own game.
- (h) Tell the victim there is nothing wrong with them and it is not their fault.

Creation of a positive environment through discipline

Young people in Bray Chess Academy need to learn to become responsible for themselves and to accept themselves and others. Discipline should always be positive in focus, providing the structure that allows young people to learn to set their own goals and strive for them.

Where possible the main form of discipline should be through praise for:

- a. effort; and
- b. social skills as well as traditional chess skills.

Members must be helped to understand the responsibilities and implications of the freedom to make choices and decisions. Expectations of behaviour should be positively stated, agreed and communicated clearly to all involved in any activity.

Sanctions

Sanctions are an important element in maintaining discipline. However, members should have a clear understanding of where and when particular sanctions are appropriate.

Sanctions should be used in a corrective way designed to help young people improve now and in the future. A Code of Conduct devised in conjunction with the members and selected parents and one which they themselves have agreed to, can be a particularly effective device. A copy to parents can be helpful.

Sanctions should not be used to retaliate or to make the member feel better.

Sanctions should be fair, and in the case of persistent offences should be progressively applied. The following steps are suggested:

- Jointly with members and adults draw up and agree a Code of Conduct;
- Warning or sanction (e.g. temporary exclusion from the activity) if the Code of Conduct is broken;
- An interview if the Code is broken again. Members can request a parent or another member to be present. Record the date, those in attendance and outcome of the interview;
- Longer term exclusion for continued breaking of the Code and involvement of parents /guardians.

Sanctions should:

- Be used sparingly;
- Be administered in a consistent way;
- Never use any form of corporal punishment or physical force;
- Not expose a young person to embarrassment or disparagement by use of negative remarks about the young person or his / her family.