

Baseball Ireland Bullying, Cyberbullying and Respect Policy

1. Purpose

Baseball Ireland is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, inclusive and respectful environment for all participants. Bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any Baseball Ireland activity, programme or affiliated club.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote a culture of dignity, inclusion and respect.
- Prevent bullying and cyberbullying.
- Provide clear procedures for reporting and addressing concerns.
- Protect the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people.
- Support all individuals affected by bullying behaviour.

This policy is aligned with:

- Children First Act 2015.
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.
- Sport Ireland Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport.
- Baseball Ireland Codes of Conduct and Safeguarding Policies.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Players and participants.
- Coaches and assistant coaches.
- Volunteers and officials.
- Parents and guardians.
- Spectators.
- National Team and Academy personnel.
- Affiliated club members.

The policy applies to all Baseball Ireland activities, including:

- Training sessions.
- Matches and competitions.
- Camps and clinics.
- Travel and overnight events.
- Online activities and digital communications.
- Social media platforms.

3. Statement of Commitment

Baseball Ireland believes that every child and young person has the right to participate in sport free from bullying, intimidation, harassment and discrimination.

All members are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity and respect.
- Promote positive and inclusive behaviour.
- Challenge bullying behaviour where safe and appropriate.
- Report concerns promptly.
- Support individuals who experience bullying.

4. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is repeated behaviour, whether verbal, physical, social, emotional or online, which intentionally causes distress, fear, humiliation, exclusion or harm to another person.

Bullying may occur between:

- Children and young people.
- Adults and children.
- Adults and adults.

A single serious incident may also be dealt with under this policy where it has a significant impact on an individual's wellbeing or safety.

5. Types of Bullying

Bullying behaviour may include:

Physical Bullying

- Hitting, pushing, kicking or tripping.
- Damage to personal belongings.
- Physical intimidation.

Verbal Bullying

- Name-calling.
- Insults.
- Offensive comments.
- Threats or intimidation.

Social or Relational Bullying

- Exclusion from activities.
- Spreading rumours.
- Public humiliation.
- Deliberate isolation.

Emotional Bullying

- Persistent criticism.
- Manipulation.
- Intimidation.
- Humiliation.

Cyberbullying

- Harassing messages.

- Abusive comments online.
- Sharing embarrassing images or videos.
- Fake profiles.
- Exclusion from online groups.
- Abuse through messaging apps, gaming platforms or social media.

Discriminatory Bullying

Bullying based on:

- Race or ethnicity.
- Nationality.
- Religion.
- Disability.
- Gender.
- Sexual orientation.
- Family circumstances.
- Any other protected characteristic.

6. Responsibilities

Baseball Ireland

Baseball Ireland shall:

- Promote a culture of respect and inclusion.
- Provide safeguarding and anti-bullying guidance.
- Ensure concerns are managed appropriately.
- Support clubs in addressing bullying behaviour.

Clubs

Clubs shall:

- Implement this policy.
- Promote respectful behaviour.
- Address concerns promptly.
- Maintain records of reported incidents.
- Refer safeguarding concerns where required.

Coaches

Coaches must:

- Act as positive role models.
- Promote respectful behaviour.
- Monitor team culture and participant interactions.
- Challenge bullying behaviour immediately.
- Record and report incidents appropriately.
- Support participants affected by bullying.
- Never engage in bullying behaviour themselves.

Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians should:

- Encourage respectful behaviour.
- Support club policies.
- Report concerns appropriately.
- Avoid escalating conflicts through social media or other public forums.

Players

Players are expected to:

- Treat others with respect.
- Refrain from bullying behaviour.
- Support teammates who may be experiencing bullying.
- Report concerns to a trusted adult.

7. Reporting Bullying Concerns

Any participant, parent, coach, volunteer or official who experiences, witnesses or becomes aware of bullying behaviour should report the matter promptly.

Reports may be made to:

- A Coach or Team Manager.
- The Club Safeguarding Officer.
- The Club Designated Liaison Person (DLP).
- Baseball Ireland's Designated Liaison Person.
- Baseball Ireland's Safeguarding Officer.

All reports shall be treated seriously and managed sensitively.

8. Responding to Bullying Incidents

When a bullying concern is reported:

1. The concern shall be listened to and recorded.
2. Appropriate enquiries shall be made.
3. Parents or guardians may be informed where appropriate.
4. Support shall be provided to affected individuals.
5. Appropriate interventions shall be implemented.
6. Outcomes shall be monitored and reviewed.

Responses should be proportionate, educational and aimed at resolving the behaviour while protecting all participants.

9. Bullying and Safeguarding

Baseball Ireland recognises that serious, persistent or targeted bullying may constitute emotional abuse.

Where bullying behaviour:

- Places a child at risk of significant harm;

- Causes serious emotional distress;
- Involves coercion, threats or exploitation; or
- Raises wider child welfare concerns,

the matter shall be managed through Baseball Ireland safeguarding procedures and referred to the appropriate authorities where necessary.

10. Online Behaviour and Cyberbullying

All members must use digital platforms responsibly.

Members must not:

- Post abusive or threatening content.
- Share images without permission.
- Humiliate or target individuals online.
- Create or distribute harmful content.
- Use team communication platforms to exclude, intimidate or harass others.

Concerns relating to cyberbullying shall be managed under both this policy and Baseball Ireland's Social Media Policy.

11. Record Keeping

Clubs and Baseball Ireland shall maintain appropriate records of reported bullying incidents.

Records shall:

- Be factual and objective.
- Be stored securely.
- Be accessible only to authorised personnel.
- Be retained in accordance with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

12. Breaches of Policy

Breaches of this policy may result in:

- Verbal or written warnings.
- Behaviour agreements.
- Additional education or training.
- Suspension from activities.
- Disciplinary action under Baseball Ireland regulations.
- Referral through safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

13. Support Services

Participants may seek support from:

- Club Safeguarding Officers.
- Baseball Ireland Safeguarding Personnel.
- Parents or guardians.
- School support services.
- Tusla.

- An Garda Síochána.
- Childline and other recognised support services.

14. Review

This policy shall be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner if required by legislative changes, safeguarding developments, or organisational requirements.