



Swindon Town FC Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures

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1.6	Kirk McGinn	Annual review	18th August 2023	1 st September 2024	Rob Angus

SWINDON TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB



Anti-Bullying Policy

Swindon Town Football Club is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all players so that they can participate in football in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and is regarded in football as a type of abuse. If bullying does occur, players or their parents should be able to recognise this and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. All incidents will be approached with equal thoroughness and consistency.

Swindon Town FC expects that anyone who knows that bullying is happening should report it to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, Kirk McGinn and his email address is safeguarding@swindontownfc.co.uk or other appropriate member of staff, who will then in turn report it to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

1. What is bullying?

- Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person.
- Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.
- Bullying is unprovoked and repetitive.
- Bullying may be carried out by one person or by a group and gives the bully or bullies a perceived position of power.

Bullying can be any of the following:

Emotional:

Includes but is not limited to, being unfriendly, emotional or physical exclusion, sending hurtful text messages or messages on a social network such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, and tormenting (hiding property or making threatening gestures, for example).

Physical:

Includes but is not limited to pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, or any other use of violence.

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Verbal:

Includes but is not limited to name-calling, spreading rumours, sarcasm or teasing.

Racist:

Bullying because of, or focussing on the issue of race.

Sexual:

Includes but is not limited to unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.

Homophobic:

Bullying because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality.

Victims of bullying may be smaller/weaker than their peers, larger than their peers, lacking in confidence, hard working, or not conform to the group 'norm'.

Bullies may be bigger/stronger than their victim, confident, less able, enjoy conflict and aggression, also be a victim of bullying, be trying to raise their self-esteem, be seeking attention, or be experiencing problems at home.

2. Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts and no one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Individuals who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. The impact upon a child or young person can be devastating and, in some cases, affect all aspects of their life. In extreme circumstances it can lead to suicide threats or even attempts. Swindon Town Football Club has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

3. Objectives of this policy:

- Bullying will not be tolerated
- Players have the right to feel safe
- Every player is responsible for their own behaviour and expected to treat everyone with respect.
- All players, parents/carers, staff and volunteers should have an understanding of what bullying is.

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- All players, parents/carers, staff and volunteers should know what Swindon Town Football Club's policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- Swindon Town Football Club takes bullying very seriously. Players and their parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

4. Signs and indicators:

A person may indicate by signs or behaviours that he or she is being bullied.

Parents/carers, staff and volunteers should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Says they are being bullied
- Is unwilling to go to sessions
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacks confidence
- Feels ill before training sessions
- Comes home with clothes torn or training equipment damaged
- Has possessions go missing
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

In more extreme cases:

- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Bullies other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

These signs and behaviours may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

5. Procedures:

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1. Report bullying incidents to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or to any member of staff, who will in turn report it to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.
2. The victim will be reassured that their allegation will be taken seriously, and that action will and is being taken. Victims are told not to bully back, to say 'no', to walk away and to say they don't want to get involved.
3. Action is taken for all minor incidents. This reassures bullies and victims that the behaviour is not tolerated.
4. An incident form is completed by the Designated Safeguarding Officer or another member of staff detailing the allegation.
5. Players who witness a bullying incident are told to not stand by and watch, not to join in and to tell their coach. As such, incident forms are also completed by players who are reported to have witnessed the incident.
6. In cases of serious bullying, advice may be sought from Wiltshire Football Association, the EFL or The Football Association. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
7. Parents should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.
8. In some cases, the football club will get all parties involved together as it may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
9. If this fails or is not appropriate, staff including the Academy Manager, Academy Director, the lead coach of the relevant phase and the Designated Safeguarding Officer should meet with the player making the allegation and their parents/carers to get details of the allegation. Minutes will be taken and agreed by all as a true account.
10. The same staff should meet with the alleged bully and their parent/carer and put the incident raised to them to answer and give their view of the allegation. Minutes will be taken and agreed by all as a true account.
11. If bullying does appear to have taken place, the individual should be warned and given disciplinary action. Consideration should again be given at this time as to whether a reconciliation meeting between all parties is appropriate.
12. At this point, the bullying behaviour should stop and an attempt made to help the bully or bullies change their behaviour.

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13. If this fails and the bullying is seen to continue, further disciplinary action may be taken and if the behaviour continues, the players may be deregistered from the club.
14. All coaching staff who come into contact with the players involved will be made aware of any incidents and the outcomes from club action.

In the case of adults reported to be bullying anyone in the Club aged 18 or below:

1. The Designated Safeguarding Officer should be informed and will advise on the action to be taken. This may be done after seeking advice from Wiltshire Football Association, the EFL or The Football Association.
2. If the allegation relates to poor practice, they may be asked to have further best practice training or to re-do their FA Safeguarding Children workshop.
3. More serious cases will be referred to the police or to children's services and the adult concerned will face disciplinary proceedings.

6. Prevention:

Swindon Town Football Club has a comprehensive anti-bullying policy in place.

All new coaches, players and the parents/carers receive a copy of this policy when they begin at the Club and a further copy at the start of every new season they remain at the Club. They sign a pro- forma to say that they have received, read, understood and agree to adhere to the policy. This is kept in their individual files.

In the event of a bullying issue, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will meet with appropriate other members of senior management to discuss the issue openly and constructively and consider the best methods of approaching those involved.

Prevention is better than cure.