



Policy Name:	Bullying & Harassment Policy
Approved by:	General Committee
Responsible:	Wellbeing Committee Chair
Effective Date;	October 2020
Review Cycle:	Every 2 years

Statement

Eltham Basketball Club is committed to providing an environment which accepts difference, and is caring and responsive to individual needs, and recognises that such an environment is crucial in responding to the complex issue of bullying. All club participants are entitled to feel safe and gain maximum advantage from their time at the Eltham Basketball Club. Within this context, the Club has a zero tolerance to bullying - **bullying is completely unacceptable behaviour**. Bullying is damaging to the self-esteem of the victim and can impede the enjoyment of sport and make it an unpleasant, if not traumatic experience.

The Club will seek to develop protocols to raise awareness of bullying, address incidents of bullying and facilitate a positive and caring environment that does not foster bullying or violence. Coaches, organisers and parents should act as appropriate role models, and be vigilant in identifying and dealing with bullying. Players have a responsibility to be caring, positive and supportive of one another, and to use the resources of the club to work through relationship difficulties.

Definition

Bullying is deliberately hurting a person either physically, verbally, psychologically or socially. It involves a power imbalance where one person has power or strength (e.g., physical, mental, social or financial) over another. It can be carried out by one person or several people who are either actively or passively involved.

Bullying can be a 'one-off' incident, but usually involves repeated actions or incidences. It can occur everywhere: at home, school, work, playgrounds, while participating in sport, when using public transport or walking to or from home. An individual may bully their victim face to face or use technology such as a mobile phone or computer.

In the basketball context bullying can take many forms, including the following examples:

- a parent telling their child that they are incompetent, hopeless or useless
- a coach alienating a player or team member (adult or child)
- several people ganging-up on an individual team member
- spectators verbally abusing players from the opposition
- a player calling a referee names and using put-downs
- a parent intimidating a young coach
- a player posting abusive or intimidating posts on social media

- a coach or player posting comments about a player or coaches' ability on social media

Types of bullying may include:

- **physical bullying**- pushing, fighting, pinching, misuse or abuse of others' property
- **verbal/written bullying**- put downs, name calling, derisive comments, sexual comments, written graffiti, social media comments, intimidation
- **gestures** - dirty looks, making obscene gestures behind peoples backs
- **psychological bullying** – ganging up, taking someone's possessions, sending abusive emails or text messages
- **social bullying/exclusion** – ignoring, spreading rumours, imposing unreasonable penalties
- **cyber bullying** - which is carried out through an internet service such as email, a chat room, discussion group, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone text messaging.

Examples of cyber bullying behaviour include teasing and being made fun of; spreading rumours online; sending unwanted messages and defamation

What can I do if I am being bullied?

While it may not seem like it, you do have options. There is always something you can do. Speak out and tell someone – a parent, coach, manager or senior club member. Explain to them what is happening and that you want the bullying to stop.

- If possible, avoid the bully and being alone with the bully.
- Do not travel to and from training and games alone.
- Consider confronting the bully(ies) and standing up to them. You could say, "What did I do to you?" But do not react by physically hurting them as you will most likely find yourself in trouble.

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Signs a person is being bullied

A person, especially a child, may not always ask for support when being bullied. They may feel afraid, ashamed or embarrassed and that the person they tell will think they are weak. Victims of bullying may think that they deserve to be bullied or are 'dobbing' by telling someone what is happening to them.

The following are signs that a person may be being bullied:

- finds excuses for not wanting to attend training or games (e.g., feeling sick, has an injury, has too much work to do) or talking about hating their sport;
- wants to be driven to training or matches instead of walking;
- regularly the last one picked for team or group activities;
- alienated from social or shared activities;
- has bruising or other injuries;
- becomes uncharacteristically nervous, worried, shy or withdrawn;
- clothing or personal possessions are missing or are damaged;
- repeatedly 'loses' money or possessions;
- suddenly prone to lashing out at people either physically or verbally.

Bullying and the law

Bullying that involves physical assault is against the law. Bullying that involves, harassment or discrimination can be against the law under certain circumstances (e.g., racial and sexual harassment). Because bullying can contribute to psychological injury it may be covered under occupational health and safety legislation.

Managing bullying

Eltham Basketball Club will not allow or tolerate bullying. We recognise and subscribe to the Basketball Victoria Codes of Conduct and the Member Protection By-Laws that apply to all participants in sport. These documents can be read at http://basketballvictoria.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/BV_Member_Protection_By-law_-_amended_22_november2009.pdf

Bullying behaviour is damaging to all involved - the bully, victim, family members, those that witness the behaviour and the sporting club involved. Players, parents, coaches, administrators and sporting clubs all have an ethical and legal responsibility to take action to prevent bullying occurring in sport and to manage it should it occur. We encourage all members to be 'upstanders', not 'bystanders' if bullying occurs.

There are several things that coaches, parents and administrators can do to prevent bullying from occurring, or manage it should it occur within Eltham Basketball Club:

- Ensure the victim/s are safe.
- Take all signs of bullying seriously. Show interest and sympathy with every allegation of bullying and provide support.
- Encourage members to speak out and tell someone (a parent, coach, manager or child safety officer) if they are being bullied or if they witness bullying. The expectation is that if anyone knows that bullying is happening, they report this to the appropriate person (coach, team manager, club official and/or child safety officer) – being an 'upstander' rather than a 'bystander'.
- Reassure the victim/s that you will help them. Also advise them that to help them you may need to tell others about the problem (i.e., do not say you will not tell anyone).
- Keep records of what was said (i.e., what happened, who was involved, when the incidents occurred, how the matter was handled).
- Telling the victim/s to 'ignore' the bully rarely works. Experts agree that a passive or distressed reaction can encourage the bully(ies) because it is the reaction they are looking for.
- After a period of time, follow-up with the victim/s (and parents if appropriate) to find out if the bullying has stopped.
- Some forms of bullying constitute assault, harassment or discrimination under federal and state legislation and are therefore illegal. Please seek advice from the Eltham Child Safety and Wellbeing team (Child safety Officers) at welfare@elthamwildcats.net.au

Actions

If the club decides it is appropriate for them to deal with the situation, they should adopt the follow process:

- Conciliation by getting the parties together; it may be that a genuine apology solves the problem. If possible, the bully and the bullied person will be reconciled.
- If this fails, or is not appropriate, a small panel selected by the Executive Committee should meet with the parent and the child alleging bullying to obtain details of the allegation. Minutes should be taken and shared. The same small panel should meet with the alleged bully and parent/s and put the allegation raised to them and allow the child and parent/s to respond and to give their views. Minutes again should be taken and shared.
- If the panel decides bullying has in their view taken place, the individual should be warned and put on notice of any further action by the club i.e., temporary or permanent suspension if the bullying continues. Consideration should be given as to whether a conciliation meeting between parties is appropriate at the time.
- All coaches involved with both individuals should be made aware of the concerns and outcome of the process i.e., the warning etc.
- Panel should closely monitor the situation for a given period to ensure the bullying is not being repeated
- The bully (bullies) may be asked to apologise, or other consequences may take place. In serious cases of bullying, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.

When notified Club staff, officials and Child Safety Officers will deal with any reported allegations however, if the issue is not resolved, a Club member may wish to start a Grievances Processes as noted in the Club's Statement of Rules.

This document was developed utilising and adapting content from

<https://www.aascf.com.au/files/Australian-Sports-Commission-Factsheet-Bullying.pdf>

<https://www.playbytherules.net.au/got-an-issue/bullying>