



## BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

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**CONTROLLING BODY:** NIDDRIE GYMNASTICS Committee

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# IS IT BULLYING?

When someone says or does something  
UNINTENTIONALLY harmful and they do it once, that's

## RUDE

When someone says or does something  
INTENTIONALLY hurtful and they do it once,  
OR you INTENTIONALLY do it back, that's

## MEAN

When someone says or does something  
INTENTIONALLY hurtful and they KEEP DOING IT, even when  
you tell them to stop or show them you're upset, that's

## BULLYING

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### 1. PURPOSE

NIDDRIE GYMNASTICS is committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- explain the definition of bullying so that there is shared understanding amongst all members of the Niddrie Gymnastics community
- make clear that no form of bullying at Niddrie Gymnastics will be tolerated
- outline the strategies and programs in place at Niddrie Gymnastics to build a positive club culture and prevent bullying behaviour
- ask that everyone in our community be alert to signs and evidence of bullying behaviour, and accept responsibility for reporting bullying behaviour to our staff
- ensure that all reported incidents of bullying are appropriately investigated and addressed
- ensure that support is provided to children or adults who may be affected by bullying behaviour (including targets, bystanders and others engaging in bullying behaviour).

When responding to bullying behaviour, Niddrie Gymnastics aims to:

- be proportionate, consistent and responsive
- find a constructive solution for everyone
- stop the bullying from happening again
- restore the relationships between the people involved.

Niddrie Gymnastics acknowledges that club staff owe a duty of care to children to take reasonable steps to reduce the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm, which can include harm that may be caused by bullying behaviour.

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## 2. POLICY

### Definitions

#### **Bullying**

In 2018 the Education Council of the Council of Australian Governments endorsed the following definition of bullying:

- Bullying is an ongoing and deliberate misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that intends to cause physical, social and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power, over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening.
- Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through the sharing of digital records)
- Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders. Single incidents and conflicts or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as *bullying*.

Bullying has three main features:

- It involves a misuse of power in a relationship
- It is ongoing and repeated, and
- It involves behaviours that can cause harm.

There are four main types of bullying behaviour:

- **Physical** – examples include hitting, pushing, shoving, intimidating or otherwise physically hurting another person, damaging or stealing their belongings. It includes threats of violence.
- **Verbal/written** – examples include name-calling or insulting someone about an attribute, quality or personal characteristic.
- **Social** (sometimes called relational or emotional bullying) – examples include deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, sharing information that will have a harmful effect on the other person and/or damaging a person’s social reputation or social acceptance.
- **Cyberbullying** – any form of bullying behaviour that occurs online or via a mobile device. It can be verbal or written and can include threats of violence as well as images, videos and/or audio.

Bullying can be a form of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia or other type of social prejudice when the behaviour is targeted at an individual or group because of a personal characteristic, such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

For further information about bullying, refer to: [Bully Stoppers \(education.vic.gov.au\)](http://education.vic.gov.au) and the Department’s [Bullying Prevention and Response](#) policy on the Policy and Advisory Library.

## Other distressing and inappropriate behaviours

Many distressing and inappropriate behaviours may not constitute bullying even though they are unpleasant.

- **Mutual conflict** involves an argument or disagreement between people with no imbalance of power. In incidents of mutual conflict, generally, both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution to the issue. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- **Social rejection or dislike** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

- **Single-episode acts** of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. However, single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression are not acceptable behaviours at our club and may have serious consequences for children engaging in this behaviour.
- **Harassment** is language or actions that are demeaning, offensive or intimidating to a person. It can take many forms, including sexual harassment and disability harassment. Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at Niddrie Gymnastics and may have serious consequences for children engaging in this behaviour.
- **Discrimination** is behaviour that treats someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic (for example, race, religious belief or activity, disability, sex or intersex status, gender identity or sexual orientation).

Discrimination, harassment, and any other inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated at our club and there may be serious consequences for children engaging in this behaviour. This includes any form of racism, religious or disability discrimination, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, or any other behaviour that targets an individual or group.

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## **Bullying Prevention**

Niddrie Gymnastics strives to foster a club culture that prevents bullying behaviour by modelling and encouraging behaviour that demonstrates acceptance, kindness and respect.

At our Club:

- We have a positive club environment that provides safety, security and support for children and promotes positive relationships and wellbeing.
  - We strive to build strong partnerships between the club, families and the broader community which means all members work together to ensure the safety of our children.
  - Children are encouraged to look out for each other and to talk to coaches, staff and parents about any bullying they have experienced or witnessed.
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## **Incident Response**

### **Reporting concerns to Niddrie Gymnastics**

- Bullying complaints will be taken seriously and responded to sensitively at our club.
- Children who may be experiencing bullying behaviour, or children who have witnessed bullying behaviour, are encouraged to report their concerns to club coaches/staff as soon as possible.
- Our ability to effectively reduce and eliminate bullying behaviour is greatly affected by children and/or parents and carers reporting concerning behaviour as soon as possible, so that the responses implemented by Niddrie Gymnastics are timely and appropriate in the circumstances.
- We encourage students to speak to their coach. However, children are welcome to discuss their concerns with any trusted member of staff including office staff.

Parents or carers who develop concerns that their child is involved in, or has witnessed bullying behaviour at Niddrie Gymnastics should contact either our office staff or Head Coach via phone on (03) 9379 1288 or email: [info@niddriegymnastics.org.au](mailto:info@niddriegymnastics.org.au)

### **Investigations**

To appropriately investigate an allegation of bullying, our staff may:

- speak to those involved in the allegations, including the target/s, the children allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour/s and any witnesses to the incidents
- speak to the parents of the children involved
- speak to the coaches of the children involved
- take notes of all discussions for future reference
- obtain written statements from all or any of the above.
- All communications with the child in the course of investigating an allegation of bullying will be managed sensitively. Investigations will be completed as quickly as possible to allow for the behaviours to be addressed in a timely manner.
- The objective of completing a thorough investigation into the circumstances of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine the nature of the conduct and the students involved. A thorough understanding of the alleged bullying will inform staff about how to most effectively implement an appropriate response to that behaviour.
- Serious bullying, including serious cyberbullying, is a criminal offence and may be referred to Victoria Police. For more information, see: [Brodie's Law](#).

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### **Responses to bullying behaviours**

When the staff member has sufficient information to understand the circumstances of the alleged bullying and the students involved, a number of strategies may be implemented to address the behaviour and support affected.

There are a number of factors that will be considered when determining the most appropriate response to the behaviour. When making a decision about how to respond to bullying behaviour, Niddrie Gymnastics will consider:

- the age and maturity of the students involved
- the severity and frequency of the bullying, and the impact it has had on the target student
- whether the student/s engaging in bullying behaviour have displayed similar behaviour before
- whether the bullying took place in a group or one-to-one context
- whether the students engaging in bullying behaviour demonstrates insight or remorse for their behaviour
- the alleged motive of the behaviour, including any element of provocation.

Niddrie Gymnastics understands the importance of monitoring and following up on the progress of children who have been involved in or affected by bullying behaviour. Where appropriate, our staff will also endeavour to provide parents and carers with updates on the management of bullying incidents.

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## Resources

The following websites and resources provide useful information on prevention and responding to bullying, as well as supporting students who have been the target of bullying behaviours:

- [Bully Stoppers](#)
- [Report racism or religious discrimination in schools](#)
- [Kids Helpline](#)
- [ReachOut Australia](#)
- [Lifeline](#)
- [Bullying. No way!](#)
- [Student Wellbeing Hub](#)
- [eSafety Commissioner](#)
- [Australian Student Wellbeing Framework](#)